GUIDE TO THE S17 MATACO FILE

[The Mataco (Mataguayo) are an American Indian ethnic group located in the western sector of the Argentine Gran Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo (5: Fock, p. 91). Greenberg classifies the Mataco language within the Macro-Panoan subfamily of the Gé-Pano-Carib language family. Peoples who are closely related linguistically include the Choroti, Ashluslay, Maca, and Lengua-Enimago (cf. Julian H. Steward and Louis C. Faron, Native Peoples of South America, 1959: pp. 22, 415). Very little data are available concerning Mataco demography. The only total population estimate in the file is the one presented in 1: Pelleschi (p. 43), based upon a missionary account published in 1886; this gives a population of about 20,000 for the Mataco in the late 19th century.

The Mataco are apparently divided into three main regional groups: the Mataco-Vejos, the Mataco-Guisnay, and the Mataco-Noctenes (cf. esp. 2: Karsten, p. 26 and end map, for the distribution of these groups). The Mataco-Noctenes are said to be the least acculturated group, although influenced somewhat by the neighboring Toba.

No attempt will be made here to outline the major aspects of Mataco culture since a good, compact cultural summary is presented in 8: Moore.

Eight sources have been processed thus far for the Mataco file; two of these are translations from Spanish, one from French, and the remaining five are in English. 1: Pelleschi is the earliest and main source, but it falls far short of constituting an adequate ethnography. Pelleschi was a civil engineer who traveled in the Chaco around 1875, and his observations on the Mataco cover a wide variety of topics, including an analysis of their

language. This source also contains an historical section by Lafone Quevedo, who was responsible for expanding, reorganizing, and translating Pelleschi's work into Spanish from the original Italian edition.

2: Karsten is by an ethnologist who did extensive field work among the Indians of the Gran Chaco during 1911-13. But he worked primarily with the Choroti and Toba, making only occasional visits to the Mataco except for a stay of about one month in 1912 among the Mataco-Noctenes (pp. 17, 20, 26-27). While Karsten presents some general data on the Mataco, his emphasis is on religious life.

Métraux and Dijour are both ethnologists who did field work in the Gran Chaco during the 1930s. Again, Métraux's work, as in the case of Karsten's, focused mainly on other groups - especially the Pilaga and Toba. He did begin a longer study of the Mataco in 1939, but this was cut short by illness.

3: Métraux, based on field work in 1933, is mostly an account of myths and tales, whereas 4: Métraux consists of brief notes on a variety of topics. 6: Métraux deals with Mataco suicide, most of the information being obtained from English missionaries in the area.

Dijour was in charge of a mission to the Argentine Chaco in 1932-33, but there is no indication of how much time she spent with the Mataco. 7: Dijour describes their ceremonies for the expulsion of illness and evil spirits.

The most recent ethnographic work in the file is by Fock, who did his field research in 1962. 5: Fock is a good, detailed study of marriage patterns.

As it now stands, the Mataco file lacks data in depth, although there is a fairly good spread of information over a broad range of subjects.]

Processed in 1958-59, 1963-66

Revised File Guide prepared in 1972
by Robert O. Lagacé

XV

The Mataguayos

In the year 1884 the Reverend Father Alejandro María Covrado in collaboration with another missionary published in Florence certain Noticias Histôricas [Historical Information] originating in the Franciscan College of Tarija and other missions, and in appendix L we find a very important account with reference to the Mataguayos which I shall quote: - page 535, etc. "The Mataguayos are spread over a vast region of the Chaco, especially the left bank of the Bermejo and the right bank of the Pilcomayo. On the Salta frontier they are commonly called Matacos, and Noctenes on the Tarija frontier, which is a corrupt form of Octenai, a name [592] given them by the Chiriguanos and which, in turn, appears to be a corruption of Huenneyei (1), which is what the

1. Plural of the word which means men.
(J. Pelleschi)

Mataguayos call themselves. By way of epilogue we shall give an account of what was reported, regarding the ways and customs of these savage tribes, by a missionary of this college who lived amongst them for many years:

"In their features and coloring the Mataguayos, Matacos or Noctenes, which are one and the same people, are very little different from the Chiriguanos. Their customs however are very different, and their languages absolutely so. Their villages are small, consisting usually of the several branches of only one family. They do not like to construct them in open places, preferring the dense forests and reed beds. The dwelling places are small huts made of branches or cane stuck in the ground, bent over and gathered at the ends, and covered with straw. On the inside they are similar to ovens; they are less than two meters high and their size is proportionate to the number of people to be housed in them. The ground passes for their bed, and is either quite bare or else covered with a mat of rushes or the skin of some animal. Cleanliness is utterly lacking. When the place gets to be full of fleas or other insects or filth they burn their hovels and build others not far off.

M
[774] some animal according to its merits in this life. They also recognize
776 with the name Ohott-at (1) (great spirit) a superior being who created

1. "O'hot" = spiritness; "tat" and "taj" = augmentative (J.P.)

them, but they do not worship this being at all. They are in great fear of an evil being who, wandering about at night, harms man, for which reason they call it Onnescilele (2) (night wanderer) and commit

2. "Onne" (hunat) = night; "sci" = locative; "lēle" = patronimic (J.P.)

themselves to his service in order to win his good will."

XVI

Some Observations on the Previous Chapter

M
114 The notes on appendix L written by Father Alejandro M.
●101 Corrado are full of material of interest for this treatise. In them he establishes that "Matacos, Mataguayos and Noctenes are one and the same thing" explaining that in Salta they are called Matacos, and in Tarija Noctenes, while the Mataguayos themselves refer to themselves as Huenneyei.

According to the good Father the name Noctenes is a corruption of Octenai, a term used by the Chiriguayos to refer to these Indians. I find myself incompetent to argue this point about the origin of the name Noctenes; but since the Tobas and Guaycurúes owe it to the Guaraníes that they are known to us by their present names it would not be at all strange that a similar thing had happened in this case also.

T
M We are given to understand by this account that not everyone
101 calls the Mataguayos Noctenes, and one can understand that this is
114 the cause of the disappearance of the Tonocoté nation. Tonocoté was a name limited to certain tribes only, but which doubtless was extended to many others, as far as language goes, because it was the first learned

M T by the missionaries and because it served them well in catechising all 114 the members of the same language family.

101 Father Cardus writes Noctenes in such a way that the obtrusive "c" participates to a degree in the sound which the Mocovíes add to every [597] medial "t" (see "Mocoví Fonologia" [Mocoví Phonology]). Because of this variant we can see that the Mataco-Mataguayos could just as well be called Noctenes as Notenes.

From the sound of the name Tonocoté I would say that it is made up of Noctenes or Notenes plus the Chaquense and very Mataco prefix "to" which means "the." The final "n" is of Spanish influence and is merely indicative of nationality. A parallel to this is that we say Tobas when the actual root word is "obá"—face—because the Guaraní language attaches to all its nouns etc. a demonstrative prefix of relation which can be "t", "r", etc.

Hervas speaks of Toconotés, Techo and others of Tonocotés. To my way of seeing it the difference of opinion can be resolved in the following manner: "Noté" is the same as "Nocoté," and the prefixes "To" and "Toco" are also identical by way of the well known degeneration "Toco" "Toho" "To." I mention the latter because even though "Nocten" and "Noten" may agree exactly in that they refer to the same thing, the qualifying prefix need not necessarily be the same in both cases.

Until such time as some more reasonable explanation appears or some contrary one is put forward I claim that the terms Tonocoté, Toconoté, Nocten and Noten have identical lexical value.

Every student of the Guaraní and related Chaco languages must needs confess that "t" and "to" are never more than demonstrative prefixes. I do not deny that "Toco" may have a more concrete meaning, such as—Colorado, the Tenco River, etc. What matters is that recognition be given to the fact that the Noctenes or Notenes may be the To-nocotes of history. This would explain all the contradictions to be found in the writings of Machoni, Jolís and Hervas.

It is inconceivable that a nation as strong as the Tonocoté could have disappeared amidst so much else that has been preserved. It was the typical Mataco, Mataguayo, Matará etc. tribe which tradition says had exiled itself to the basin of the Pilcomayo—there we find Noctenes or Notenes, which are Matacos and Mataguayos. We are then in the position of having to confess that these Indians are, more or less, the Tonocotés of history, and that the name had been lost because it was a

T
M nickname given them by neighboring nations who then stopped using
114 it. The name has cropped up again at the present time because the
101 missionaries have returned to those missions from the Chiriguano side and have adopted the name by which the latter usually referred to them.

Even if it were a matter of a name originating in the nation itself there would be some latitude in its transliteration, but the fact being that they are [598] nicknames invented by other Indians and heard and transcribed by the Spaniards allows of much greater freedom, and I do not believe that the hypothesis that the Noctenes of Father Corrado are the Tonocotés of Father Techo is so fantastic a one.

It may not be superfluous to note that the Indians whom we call Tobas call themselves by the name Tocouitt, which, compared to the other Mocouitt leaves as residue the word Toco which could be compared to the "Toco" or "To" of the Indians treated in this chapter. In the Toba and other allied languages the "C" is a false sound and the syncopation of syllables is the rule.

XVII

What Father Cardús Has to Say About the Matacos, Mataguayos, etc.

M
114 The Reverend Franciscan Father José Cardús published in Barcelona in 1886 his work entitled "Las Misiones Franciscanas" [The Franciscan Missions] of Bolivia in connection with the College of San José de Tarata. In it we find the following information about the Matacos (pages 250 to 258) which I shall quote, thus opening myself up to criticism for over prolixity, yet I feel I am justified because the information is important and credible since the missionaries write with exactness of what they have seen and known at close quarters.

I have not seen the Matacos and do not know them, and I am wary of allowing myself to be carried away by preconceived notions. Yet I must of necessity quote and not comment upon my authors who will thus say what they wish to say and not what some other person wishes them to say.

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

114 It is strange that in the last two reports so much importance has been given to the Noctén tribes about which nothing is said by authors writing in colonial times. This in itself already tends to favor the hypothesis that the Noctenes may be the Tonocotés.

In this part of the continent it does not seem that there occurred that veritable extermination of whole tribes, such as was the case with the Charruas in Uruguay and we must therefore search about somewhere for the 60,000 and more Indians who understood or spoke the Tonocoté language. Among them were the Mataguayos, who exist down to the present day; it would be only natural, then, to affirm that Mataguayo is a dialect of Tonocoté, and since Noctén and Mataguayo are closely related dialects, it follows that Noctén is as much a dialect of Tonocoté as is Mataguayo.

In the following chapter I shall set forth a report which was sent to me by Father Eliseo Molina of the Franciscan College at Tarija. [609]

XIX

What Father Doroteo Giannecchini has to Say Regarding the Noctenes and Other Mataco Tribes

● 101 "The Noctenes, Matacos, Vejoses, Guiznaes, and Chulupies belong to one single nation, for all speak the same language and have the same customs."

184 "Such nations are differentiated by their name and by traits which I shall call provincial or local."

101 "Our Noctenes, for example, who are the ones who inhabit the
131 country between the foot of the Pisapo mountain range and Pikírenda, 50 or 60 leagues to the east, are called Noctenes. In the vicinity of Pikírenda they take the name of Guiznaes; but they are of the same family as our Noctenes and are even related to them by blood."

"From Pikírenda onwards, some 30 leagues, more or less, and up to the Paraguay River they take the name of Chulupies; and along the whole right bank of the Pilcomayo River, from our first Noctén mission on to the Paraguay River, it is the same tribe: their

101 131 speech and customs are somewhat different, but in substance it is the same language, and they understand each other perfectly when each speaks in his own way."

"Across from the Colonia Crevaux, on the left bank towards the north there is another tribe called Chorotis which must originally have been a group captured by the Noctenes for their language is a true Mataco or Noctén dialect and many words are identical with Noctén words."

"It is true that these Chorotis live as unto themselves forming a separate tribe, but they are related to and have continual dealings with the Noctenes. Their pronunciation is, however, much clearer and more intelligible than that of the Noctenes."

"These same Noctenes are related to the Matacos of Oran and the Chaco, in which place the Noctenes are called Matacos, and the Matacos living between the left bank of the Oran River and the reservation in which we had a mission at the beginning of this century, take the name of Vejoses, and have their own local way of speaking the same language as the Noctenes and Matacos. Higher up, that is in our Bolivian Itiyuro, they again take the name of Matacos." [610]

[197] "The fact is then that they do not have what might be called a separate language—rather do they vary the pronunciation of certain terms which does not constitute a separate language but a local variation, as happens with the Spanish of Bolivians, Argentines, Chilians, etc., and between town and town, region and region."

This description was sent to me when I asked for a Pater-noster in Mataguayo, having already received one in Nocten.

114 All that has been transcribed in the previous chapters shows that in the opinion of the missionary fathers the typical tribe was the Nocten, and that this is the name they use where we would say Matacos and Mataguayos. It is to be understood, then, that Nocten is nothing but a corruption of the name Tonocoté or Toconoté, already mentioned.

XX

Geographic Distribution of Mataco-type Nations

101 131 From all that has been told us by the Fathers of the Company and of the Franciscan Missions it can be deduced that the Mataco tribes occupy a diagonal region which in times past extended from the basin

101 131 of the Salado (1) River to the Pilcomayo, hemmed in towards the

1. From Matará northwards.

mountains by tribes of Quichua influence and others, and in the direction of the Río de la Plata by nations of the Toba-Guaycurú type. This vast region was bounded on the north by Chiriguano territory, and on the south by the Quichuas and Pampas of the Guaycurú-Querandí type.

174 It appears at present that the basin of the Salado River ceased to be territory of the nomad Matacos who, in the past century, were replaced by the Mocovíes and other tribes of a more definite Guycurú type. Lozano in his first volume and on page 175 (Lamas Ed.) says that "gasta" means town in the Tonocoté language. This being the case these tribes must have entered the valleys of Yocavil and Londres also, for all the Andean region is full of places whose names end in "gasta" (2). According to my observations "gasta" is as Cacan a word

2. In none of the Mataco-Mataguayo dialects does the term "gasta" appear.

as is "ao."

In any case one thing must needs be conceded and that is that the Mataco tribes had shifted towards the southwest up to the Aconquija range. [611]

221 The Matacos, like the Tobas and other Guaycurú nations are and were nomads, and of course one cannot indicate exactly the areas frequented by them when they were on the move; at one time they would go in one direction, at another in another, according to pressure from more warlike tribes or from the Spaniards.

221 174 All agree that after the Spanish conquest numerous tribes of Matacos or Tonocotes withdrew towards the Pilcomayo River basin and this is exactly what would have been expected because there they were less exposed to Spanish raiders who would carry off any Indian they found to forced labor; these they used to call piezas "pieces of ordinance"--Translator].

1: Pelleschi--56 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

XXI

Ethnology of the Mataco-Tonocoté Nation or People

M
101 If it is difficult to fix the point or home territory of the Matacos, it is no less difficult to determine their ethnic origin. We lack the first requirement which is the craniology of these Indians: without that information we shall not be able to advance far, but we can at least go a little way by means of the language.

C
197 Basing my assertions on what will later be said regarding the language, I find that in the Chaco, as in the rest of America, the languages can be grouped grammatically into two large families. The one suffixes its pronominal particles, the other prefixes them. The former is represented by the nations which are Guaraní-like, and I therefore call it Atlantic, while the latter is made up of Quichua-like nations, for which reason I call it Andean or Pacific.

M
197 Holding to this classification, the Matacos as pure prefixers of the majority of pronominal particles,can be neither Lules, nor Vilelas, nor Quichuas, nor Aucasni, nor Aymaraes, since all these languages suffix these particles.

In spite of everything there exist among the Matacos and Lules certain lexical analogies which lead one to suspect some mixture, which would then certainly explain that greater placidity which is characteristic of both nations in the midst of the ferocious Guaycurues of the other parts of the Chaco. [612]

These analogies between Lules and Matacos are only of single words, but the pronouns and their particles are separated, "toto orbe." The same does not occur between the Mataco and the Quichua or Aymará: the first and second person primitive pronouns are somewhat more than merely similar, and this is reason enough to recognize that there was some original contact between the two peoples, though it is true that the Matacos are more backward.

To say that any given grouping of American Indians is of mixed origin is to come close to the truth, for in all probability not one is to be found which is not. In the present instance and judging from the point of view of linguistics, I tend to believe that the Mataco has in it some Lule and some Quichua.

This is not enough. In the reports which preface this study we have seen that the Matacos and Guaycurú-Tobas always go about together,

until the contrary is proved we must suppose that Mataco is Tonocoté.
/97/ A language as strongly rooted as this one could not possibly have become lost in the Chaco.

The Mataco language is one of the most widely used languages and is spoken by the largest grouping [618] of Indians in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos, and yet we do not find it mentioned in any writings. One can therefore only deduce that the language of the Matacos is Tonocoté; this being the only rational hypothesis which for the present fits the case.

As far as languages go we can state that what the Mojos are to the Chiquitos, the Matacos are to the Chaco tribes of the Toba-Mocoví type, and just as the former have their Mosetana tribes so the latter have their Lules and Vilelas.

XXIII

Regarding the Names Tonocoté, Mataco and Mataguayo

/101/ Nothing better has been written about this than what Hervás has set down in his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" (Catalogue of Languages) on pages 168 and 172. He asserts that the Tonocotés are the Indians called Matarás and says the following:- "Matarás is a Peruvian word which is used to signify a grass which in Spanish is often called "espadaña," etc. The words Tonocot and Toconoté (read Tonocoté) have no meaning whatever in the Lule language, according to the missionaries to the Lule nation, who have told me that they have never heard that the Tonocotés or the Matarás (who are really the Toconotés) (1) were in any way related to the Lules. Yet the Indians

/101/
/191/

1. Hervas always writes Toconoté instead of Tonocoté.

consider other tribes related to theirs when they speak the same language; a missionary to the Matarás has told me that he heard his Indians speak, on occasion, a language which was unknown to him and that when he had inquired as to what language it was he learned that it was an ancient language of the Matarás; but since this

missionary knows only the Quichua tongue, with which he communicated with the Matarás, it still is a moot question as to whether the Matará and Tonocoté languages are totally different or only dialects of the same language."

This short paragraph is one more proof of what I have been saying for some time, which is that the Fathers of the Company left more Quichua than they found in the regions which they evangelized. The Indians learn the neighboring languages with great ease: they have good memories, a well tuned ear and they pay much attention to everything which may be useful to them. [619]

The names Mataco and Mataguayo which in Father Techo refer to certain groupings and today are generic names of these tribes and their languages, are not the names with which the Indians used to refer to themselves. They called themselves Uicquñ.

To go into the etymology of the name Mataco without knowing who the first people were who applied such a name to these Indians would be a sterile job. It is probably a Quichua term or root and the only thing which might be said about it is this: that in the terms Churu-matas, Matará, Mataco and Mataguayo we find the common root Mata, which doubtless referred to some thing which was called by that name and which had to do with the persons or customs of these Indians or with the region they inhabited.

It is a strange thing that almost all the names by which we know the indigenous peoples of the Americas are artificial ones, as for example the name Guaraní; and the Matacos are by no means an exception to this rule. The Tobas called themselves Ntocovítt, and the Matacos, Uicquñ. Later, if we are able to prove that the Mataco "cq." is a mutation of "tt.," it may be seen that Uicq and Uitt are simply two variant forms of the same word meaning man.

Conclusion

An account has already been given of the Mataco Indians from the time of the coming of the Spaniards and the conquest of Tucumán in the sixteenth century. As the reader must have remarked we owed the information which we had to the Missionary Fathers, whose only object was to win souls for heaven and whose efforts in the direction of learning was limited to the end of reproducing for their catechumens, in a

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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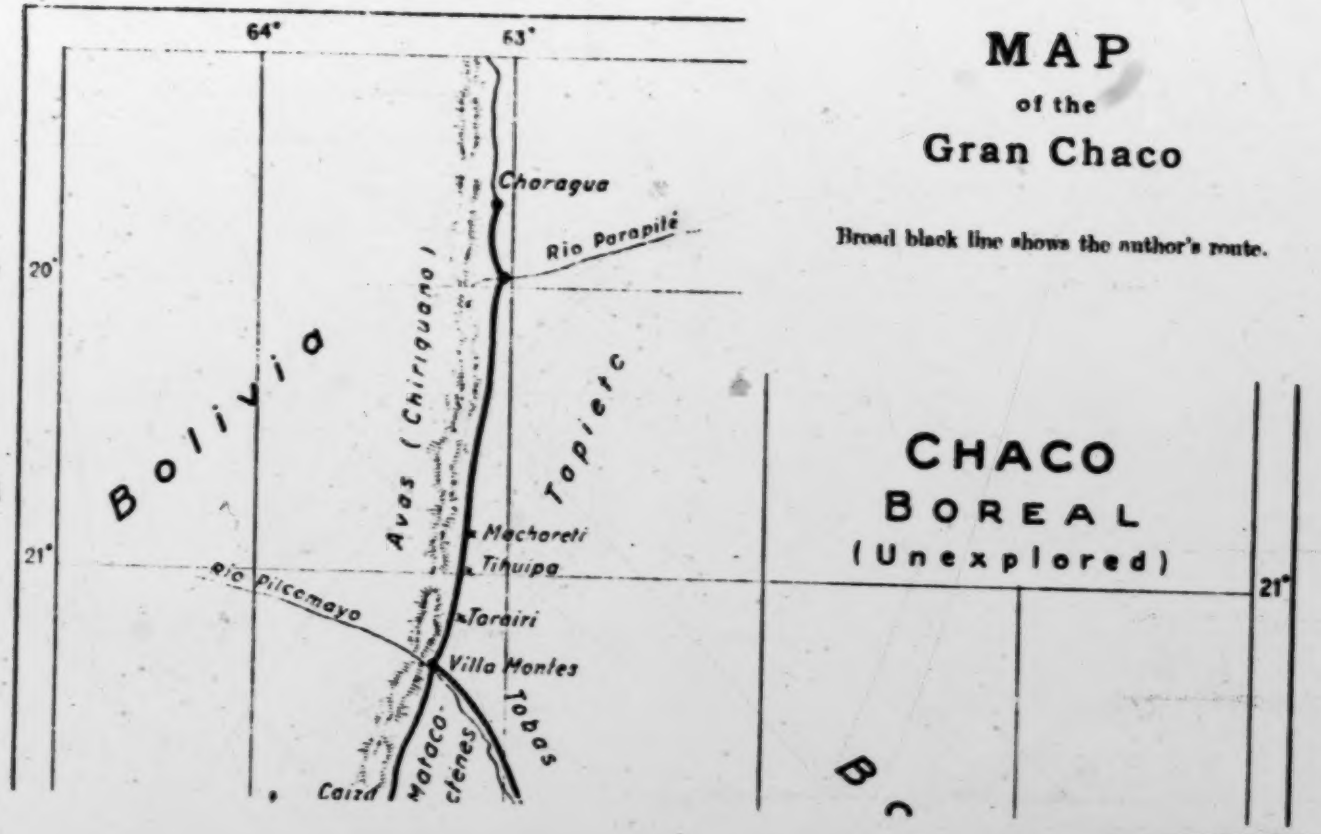
131
133

SOC. SCIENT. FENN., COMMENT. HUM. LITT. IV. 1.

MAP
of the
Gran Chaco

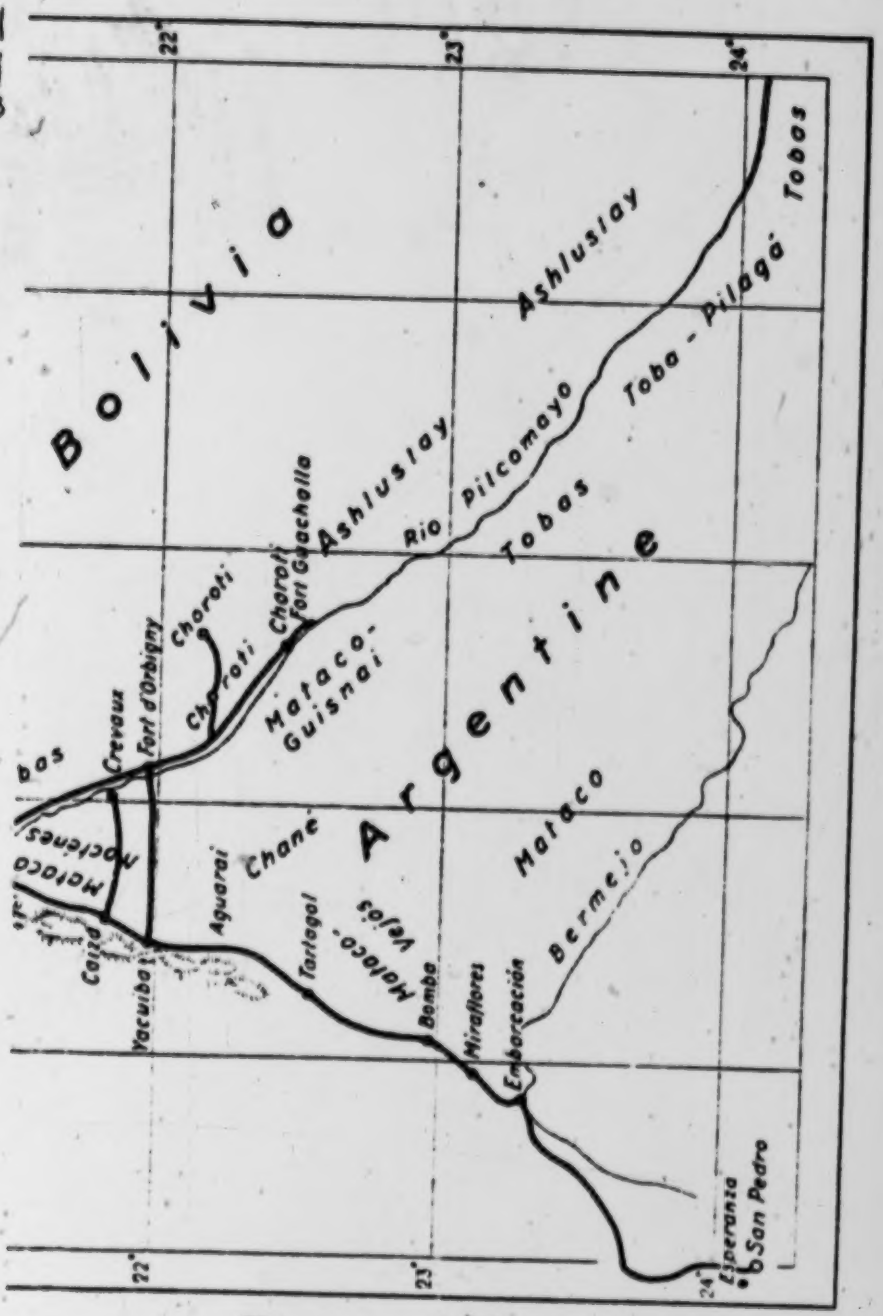
Broad black line shows the author's route.



[End Map (A)]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

● 101
131
133



[End Map (B)]

8: Moore E-4 (no date) 1965 SI7 Mataco SI7

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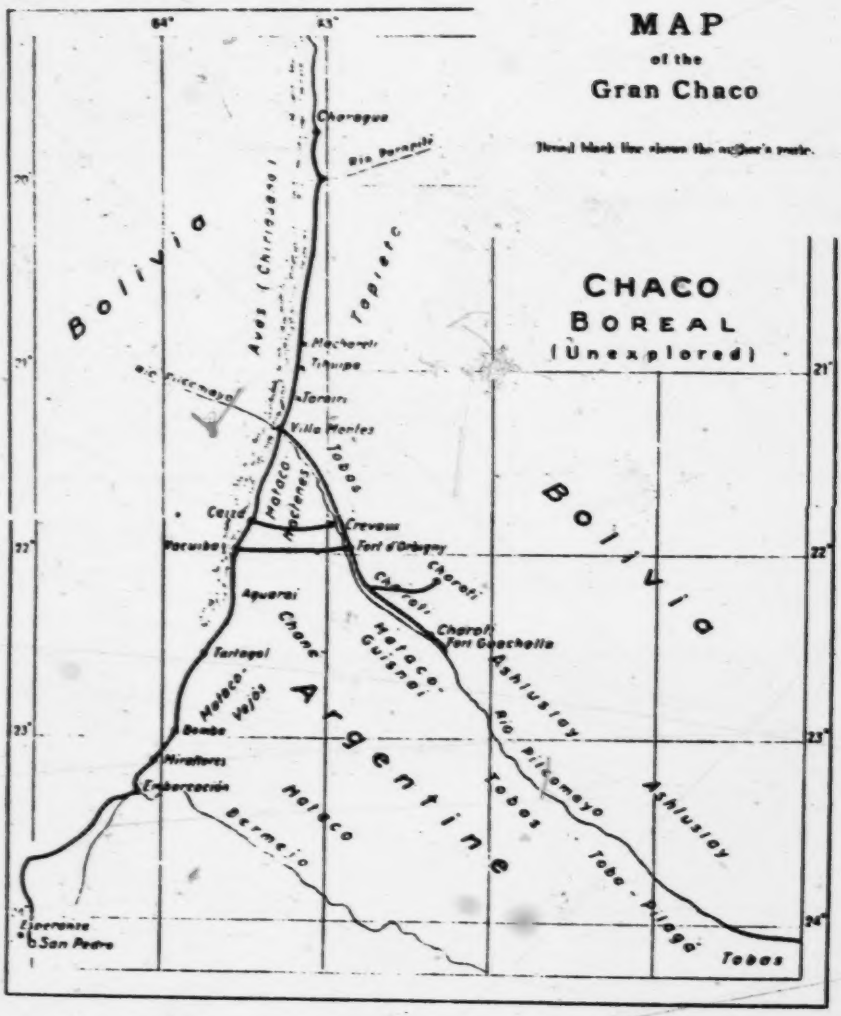
102
105

SOC. SCIENT. FENN. COMMENT. HUM. LITT. IV.1.



Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

AMS 101 131 102 133

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4

Matacó SI7

[Facing p. 198 (A)]

CHIQUITO
CHANÉ
GUANÁ
MBAYÁ
CADUVEO
(CADIGUEGODI)
CHAMACOCO
(ZAMUCO)
MOROTOCO
1711
CUCURATE
GUACHI
GUATÓ
Lagunas de los Xarayes
Río Tobaty
Río Paraguay
Río Pilcomayo
Río Bermejo
Río Grande de Guapay
Río Parapití
Río Salado
Río Negro
Río Otuquis
Río Itiyuro
Río Tarija
Río San Juan or R. Pilaya
R. Pirity
R. Blanco
Sierra Caipipendi
Sierra Aguaragüe
Sierra Tucumán
Sierra Zapla
Sierra Santa Victoria
Sierra Cayoja
Sierra Cayoja
Sierra Cayoja

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4

Mataco SI 7

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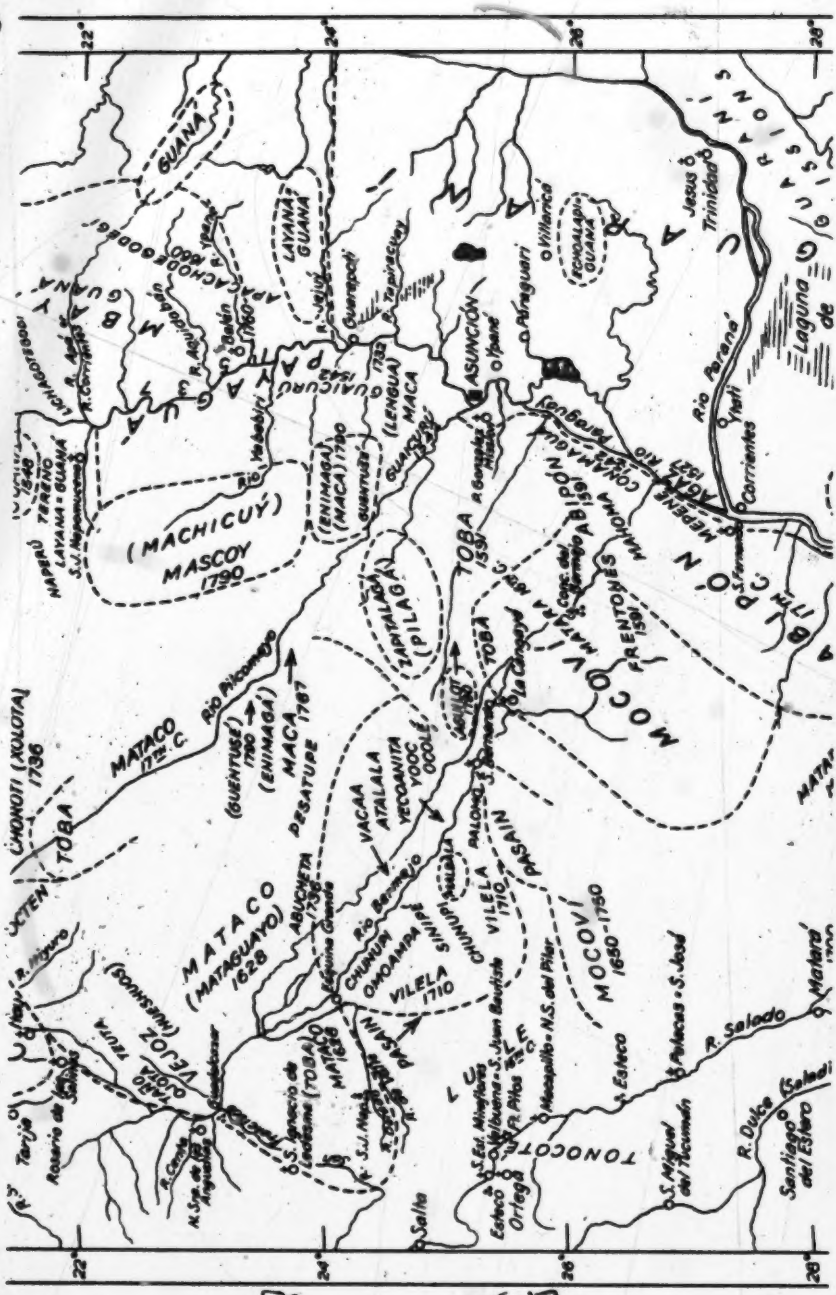
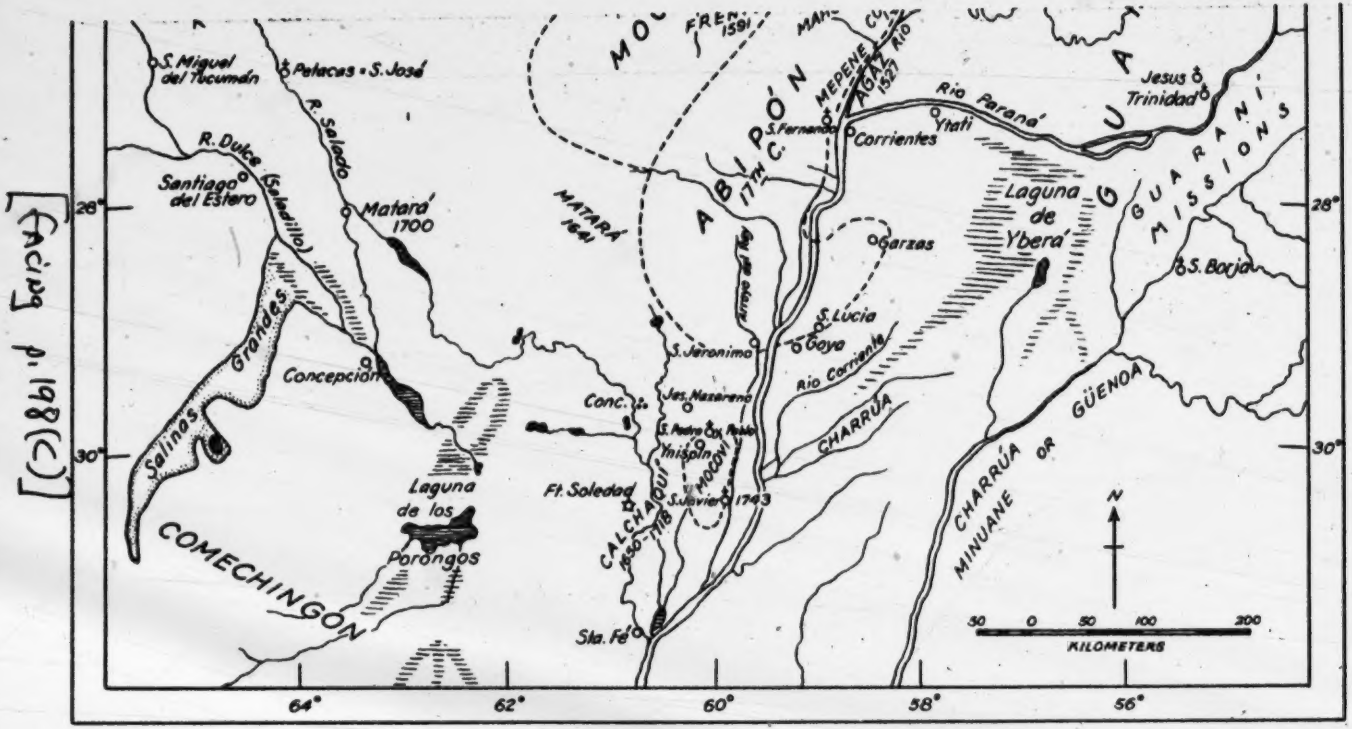


[facing p. 198(B)]



MAP 4.–Tribes of the Gran Chaco: Locations at the first European contact.

GPO O - 48 - 583488 (Face p. 198)

[Facing p. 198(C)]

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2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Matco SI7

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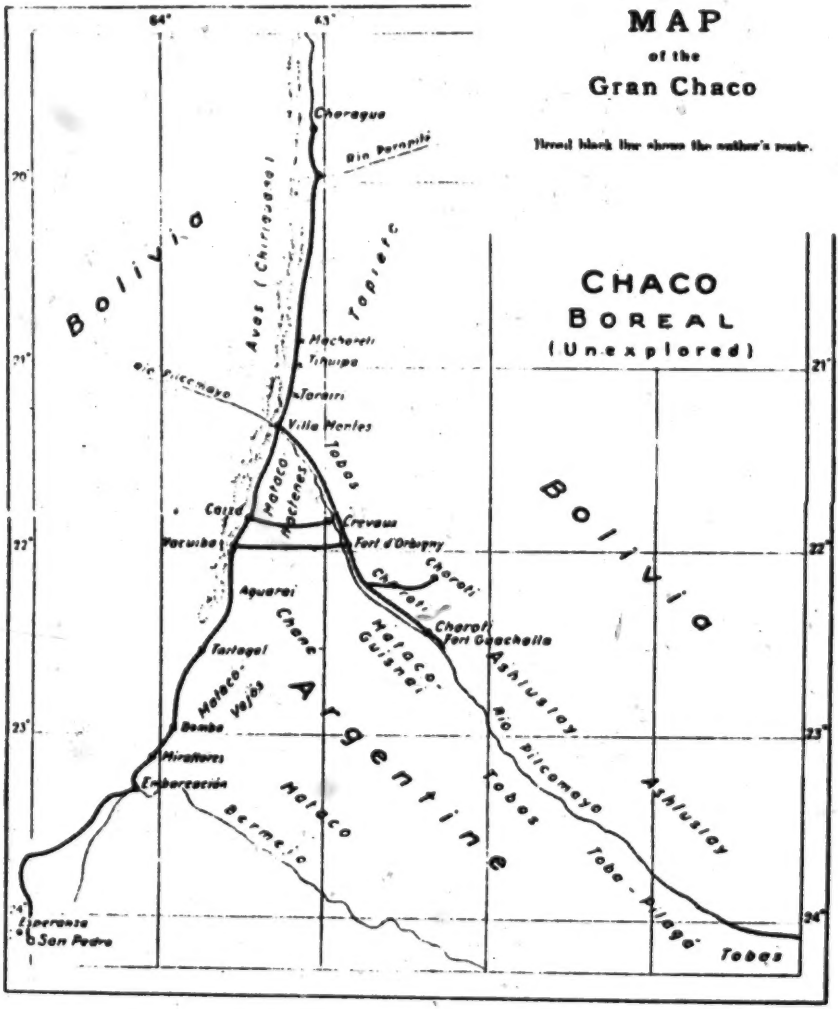

113, 102

Chane SF8
Choroti SK7
Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4
Toba SI12
Tapiete SK13
Siriono SF21

/For the map showing the location and distribution of these tribal groupings, see 4: Nino, SF10 Chiriguano, category 116, pp. 447-452./

6: Nordenskiöld--156 E-5 (1908-1909) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano SF10

Mataco SI 7●
Choroti SK6
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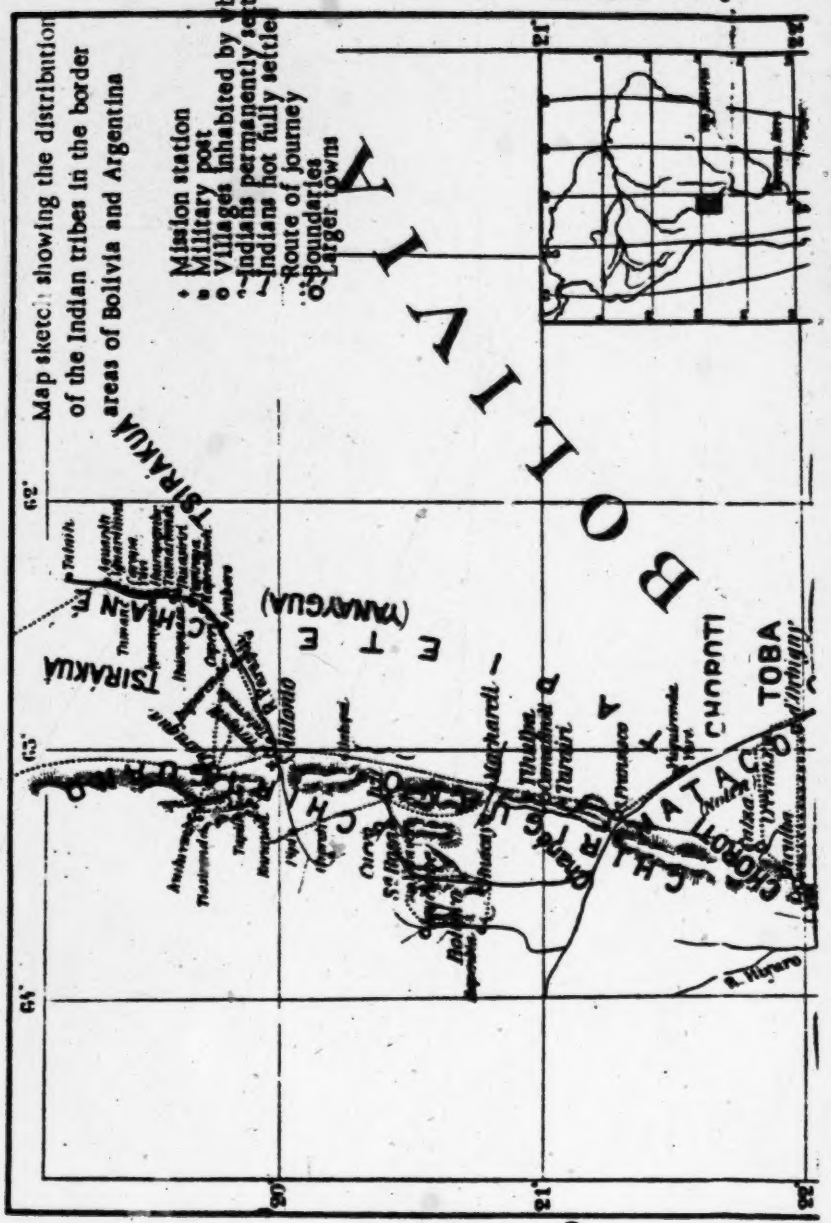

[End Map,(A)]

E: Nordenskiöld--157 E-5 (1908-1909) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano SF/C
NaTaco SF 7
Chorotí SF 8
Chané SF 8

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C 102 131 133

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4

Mataco SI7

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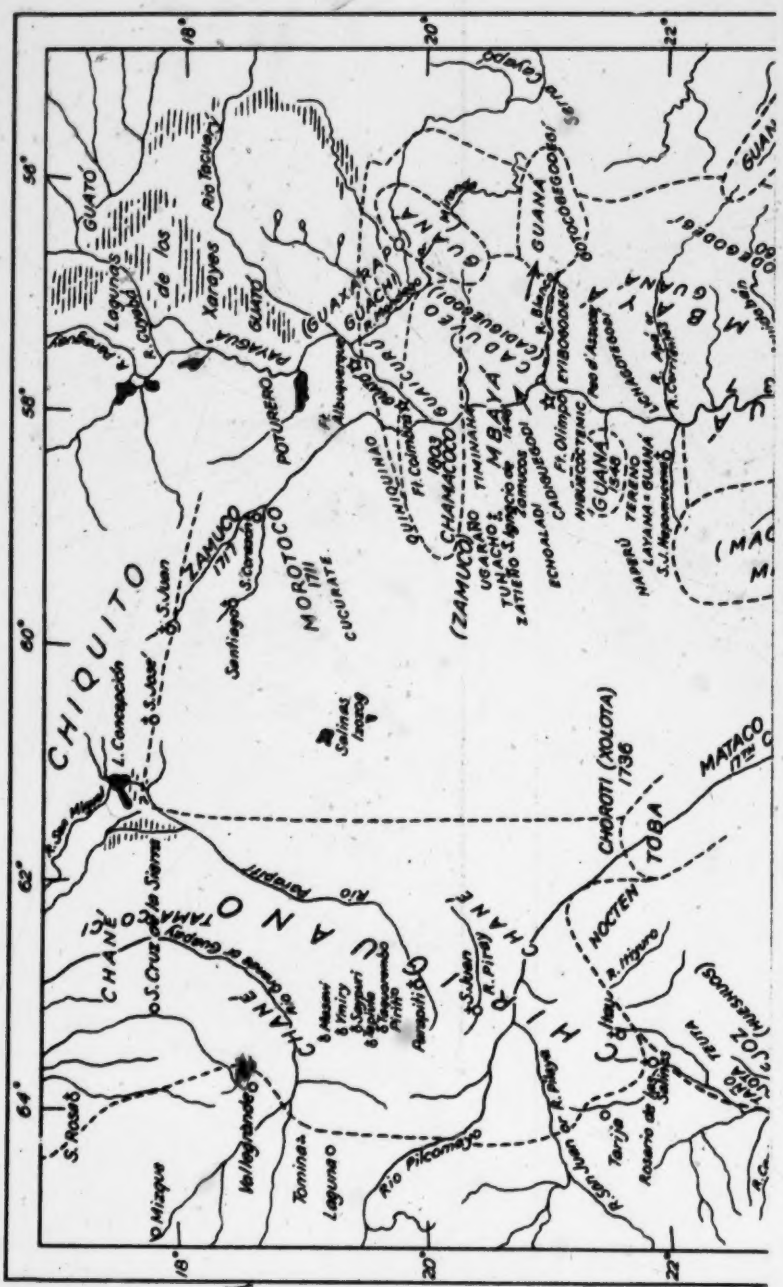

[facing p. 198 (A)]

Z: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Mataco SI 7

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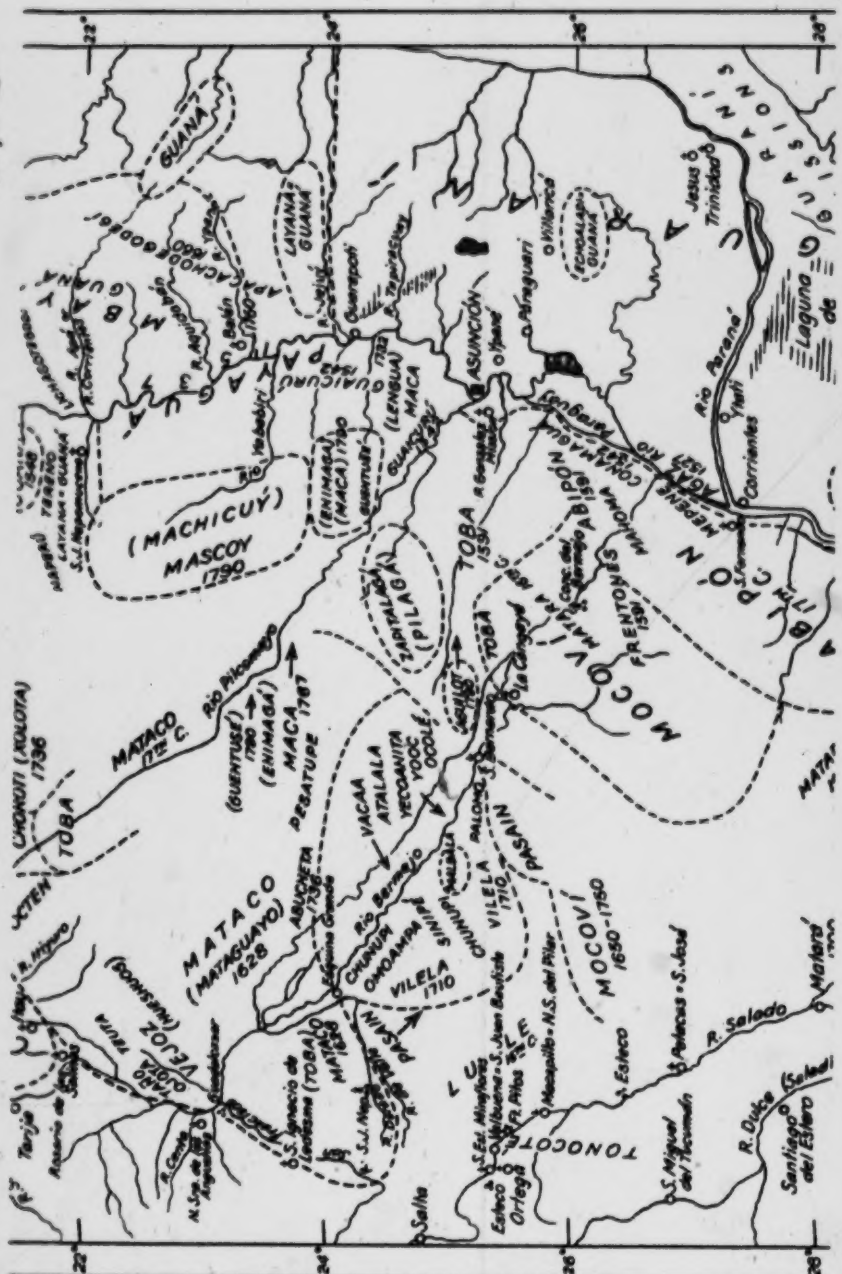

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2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4

Mataco SI7

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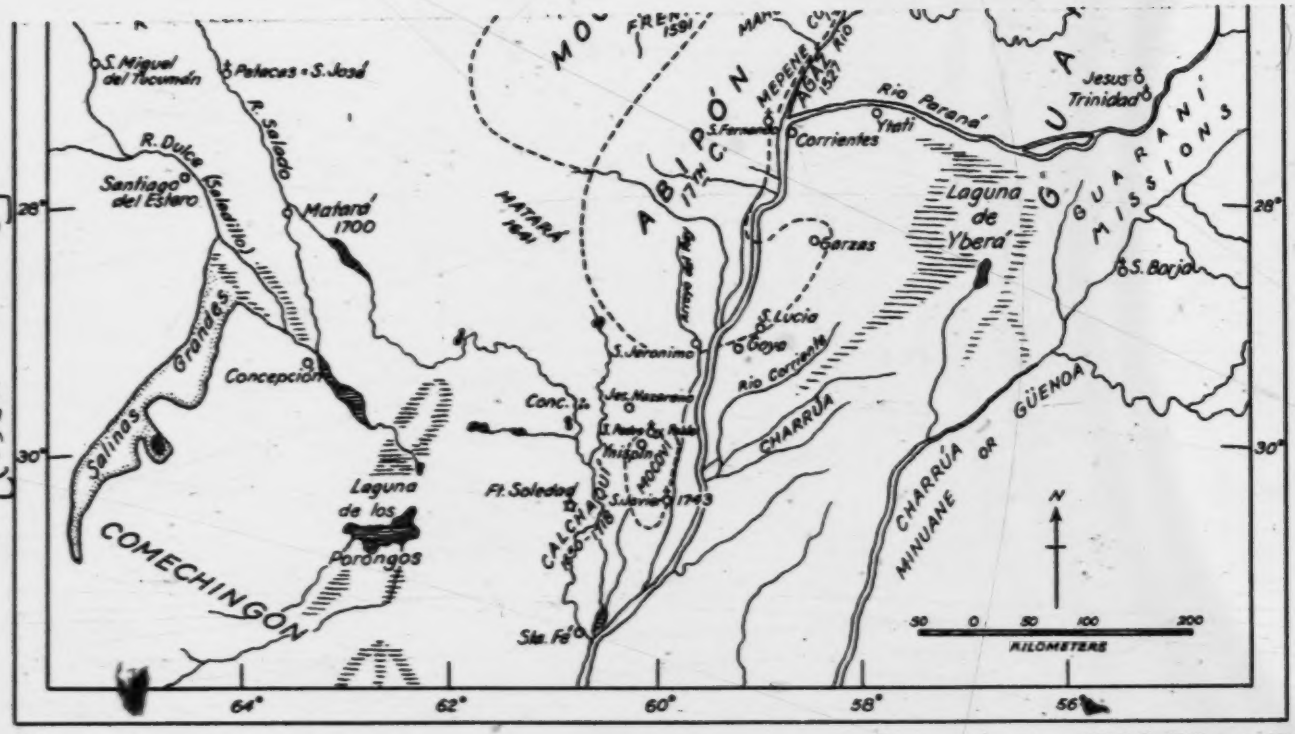

MAP 4.–Tribes of the Gran Chaco: Locations at the first European contact.

[Facing p. 198(C)]

M 175 "Some 60 leagues from the mountains, the marshes of the Pilcomayo River, in the direction of the river Bermejo, are peopled by numerous Tonocotés and Lules who drew away from the territory of Tucumán at the time of the appearance of the first Spanish conquerors." (page 54)

"The nation which lives on the other side of this one (the Teuta) (1)

1. Possibly from "teuj-taj," meaning "big river," the Mataco name for the river Bermejo. --J. Pelleschi.

is the Mataguaye nation, which is the one closest to Jujuy." (page 76)

M 191 "Some are called Mataguayes Coronados and others Mataguayes Churumatas. The Coronados speak Guaraní, although this is not their mother tongue. The Mataguayes Churumatas understand and speak several tongues, such as Quichoa [sic], Guarany [sic] and Ocloya which they pick up from the captives which they hold as prisoners in their territory. They also understand the language of the Tobas. These M 175 Mataguayes were distributed in the following fifty towns: Neantiche, 621 Mocoy, Collemage, Auncapinhe, Hucohas, Hocohá, Oyaha, Natetehá, ● 109 Chinitiohé, Onin, Anuyguay, Alesnuy, Chayabo, Chioquiose, Hucoha, Chayquehé, Chachinamí, Pelo, Cahotochin, Nacalgoy, Chenesse, Halcacha, Cheneschá, Peque, Nitilinquin, Guays, Guocopa, Hucuchinami, Tiuquiahó, Hocalá, Leguelsehá, Oyaho, Carininquin, Yantis, Luguarache, Neglisehé, Loquelesse, Queyshé, Cotonhá, Tapela, Onoralgualache, Poytin, Hopitata, Hopitahé, Tatotehé, Lechonehá, Lohoteá, Tactoy, Apagatin, Rimpihá." (page 76)

194 Not one single time do we find the ending "gasta," although something similar to "a" and "aho" does appear. A negative proof must not be given undue importance, yet it ought not to be completely ignored [574].

IX

The Description of the Mataguayos etc. continues

C M 175 "All these nations which we have mentioned with their towns, that is: Taynuyes, Teutas, Mataguayes, Agoyas, Xolotas, Tobas, Mocobies, Yapitalaguas, and also Aguilotes who live among the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Introduction.

The vast alluvial lowland commonly known under the name of *El Gran Chaco*, is situated in the heart of South America, being bounded in the east by the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, in the west by the eastern cordilleras of the Bolivian Andes, and in the north and south approximately by latitudes 20° and 30° South respectively. Politically this territory is divided between the republics Argentine, Paraguay, and Bolivia, but the boundaries between Paraguay and Bolivia have long been uncertain owing to the fact that the interior parts of the Chaco are still very little known and practically no-man's land. In fact, northern Chaco has up till now remained a white spot on the map of South America. The very name of Chaco has been much disputed, but this question may now be regarded as definitely settled. Chaco is a Spanish form of the Quichua name *chacu*, 'hunting', 'chase'. The word has reference to the great hunting expeditions which, as we know, were annually arranged by the Incas, and on which thousands of Indians were employed as drivers. The name *chacu* was later applied to the Indians who devoted themselves to this kind of chase, as well as to the tracts where these hunts took place.[1] The Incas, of course, only knew a small part of the immense territory which is now called Chaco, more strictly speaking the forest-clad slopes of the eastern cordilleras as well as the adjacent plains, regions which formerly were and in parts still are extremely rich in all kinds of game. The interior regions, particularly east of Pilcomayo, inhabited by savage Indians, were unknown to the Incas and were not explored until our own days.

The climate in the Gran Chaco is on the whole subtropical, but subject to great variations, a fact that accounts for the different character of the vegetation in different parts of the country. In the west, where

[1]) See Enrique de Gandia, *Historia del Gran Chaco*. Madrid, 1930, pp. 7 sqq.

[p. 1]

114 Mr. Pelleschi has done what Dr. Leuz is doing in Chile for the Araucanos, and with as much ground for applause.

In the author's published work my secretary and I have had no part other than that of ordering it alphabetically and compiling a Mataco-Spanish lexicon, without which no study of a language can be considered complete.

As the original is in Italian I have had to translate that part of the book which is here reproduced, leaving the checking and correcting to the author. The English understood the importance of 000 the work before [621] we did and it was shameful that the most modern and most complete description of our Indians was written in a foreign language and had not been put into the national tongue. The Geographic Institute, by means of this publication has erased that black mark, and has gone further by adding the vocabularies etc., which are lacking in the original and which give so much greater value to this work.

It is not altogether impossible that the author will make a study, later on, of what is here published in order to perfect his essay on the grammar of the Mataco language. But even if he were not to do this, what has been published is enough to give us a pretty full grasp of what the language of these Indians is and what it is not.

As the translation has been checked by the author himself, those passages which may appear to be incomplete or in which it may be observed that extra material has been inserted, are to be laid at the author's door, as must also all new material with which the work has been supplemented.

In the key which precedes the vocabularies the derivation of ● 104 words and phrases will be designated together with the key letter. As will readily be understood, this is a valuable addition to the vocabularies, for a new word, heard only once and from one person is exposed to error, but when its lexical and phonetic value is attested several times over, little doubt can remain about it. On this score also is Mr. Pelleschi's work highly interesting, it being a step in the direction of a better understanding of the tangled phonology of the Chaco languages of the Guaycurú type, of which Mataco is an important part.

000 The map was made by Guido Jacobacci, Engineer, in accord with information which we have given him and with the help of the map of Father Jolis and Corrado, and also of Araos'. One can see

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

I must stress here that the material and the spiritual culture of the Chaco tribes — half nomadic, living on mesquite, game and fish — recalls many of the conditions prevailing among North American tribes, especially those in California and certain aspects of these of the prairies. Most of the parallels which have been drawn between North American and South American ethnology rest on the culture of the very tribes among whom I was lucky enough to get the tales which I present here.

Once more I should like to call the attention of ethnologists to the abundance of material which still may be collected in South America. For a few years more there will remain the opportunity to study primitive Indian cultures functioning in their entirety. But the extraordinary riches of South American ethnology are being wasted and lost. Every year sees the passing of a tribe or of a culture. Old medicine-men, knowing the traditions of their groups, die without transmitting their knowledge. Thus the chances of scrutinizing the past culture of America grow fewer each year. South America is the least known of all the continents and its tribes are the most mysterious peoples. May I give the alarm before it is too late to grasp the now plentiful material?

Unfortunately I had little opportunity to study the phonetics of the Matako language, and I am convinced that my transcriptions might be improved. I used the following system of transcription for the native words.

č is more or less like the Spanish »ch», but slightly palatalized.

x is a surd velar fricative.

k is an aspirated back palatal.

L is the voiceless »l».

ʔ stands for the glottal stop. Glottalized consonants though existing in Matako, do not appear in the words quoted in this paper. The vowel *a* has a different quality according to the region. Along the Pilcomayo is *a* a mid-back narrow sound quite near the open »o».

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

~ on a vowel indicates nasalization.
' on a vowel marks the accentuation.

As far as possible I tried to give the pronunciation of the region of Embarcación, though Pedro spoke another dialect.

A. THE UNIVERSE

1. The Upper and the Lower World (Pedro)

There are two worlds, one above and the other below. Once the world above our heads was in the place of the earth where we live. But the earth (still further) below did not like to be soiled by the excrement of the people dwelling in the sky and therefore it changed places with the earth above. Formerly sky and earth were connected by a big tree (*niLɔk*). The men of this earth climbed up it and went to hunt in the world above. Once a number of them climbed up and succeeded in killing a jaguar. When they divided the meat, they foolishly gave the stomach to an old man. He was so indignant at getting such a miserable portion that he burned the tree, thereby avenging himself. The men who had climbed up could not get down and they still live in the sky. They are a constellation formed by many stars (Pleiades: *patseLai*).

When these first people went to the sky to hunt, they left their children at home. A mother, knowing she would never again rejoin her child on earth, threw him from the sky a deer skin bag filled with honey. The children grew up, they were our fathers.

2. The Compartments of the World (Pedro)

The world is divided into three compartments; the earth the sky and the underworld. In the underworld there are fields like those we have here. The underworld is the abode of the dead. We know it is because we can go there in our dreams to visit our dead relatives. The medicine-men also

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

primitiveness more accentuated than that of other tribes. They are among the dirtiest peoples of South America, and in the sense of cleanliness they are inferior to the Toba.

Matako material culture does not differ markedly from that of any of the other Chaco tribes. Their weapons are the same, their houses of the common beehive type, and their craftsmanship is hardly distinguishable from that of their neighbors. Judged outwardly, the Matako might be confused with the mass of Chaco cultures. A keen observer notices a slight superiority in the agriculture of the Matako,as compared with the Toba. The distinctive character of Matako culture may only be appreciated in contrast with that of the Toba-Pilagá. While the Matako are generally peaceful the Toba are warlike and have almost always been the conquerors in the far distant regions. However, it cannot be said that the Matako have not also fought bravely against their enemies or that they are lacking in military tradition. Still the contrast between them is striking even to an observer like myself who has spent only a short time among these Indians. The difference between these apparently identical cultures lies primarily in the stressing of religion and magic among the Matako in contrast with the relative unimportance of like interests among the Toba. Although built on the same pattern as that of the Toba, the culture of the Matako is interwoven with ceremonial activities, ritual dances, and expulsion of spirits. It is almost impossible to stay with a group of Matako more than one day without having the opportunity to attend some ceremony. The traditional blowing of medicine-men upon the sick occurs among the Matako as among other Chaco tribes. It is always associated with dances together with spells of magic and has rarely the individual character of the same ceremony among the Toba. Not only are the peformances of Matako medicine-men more impressive than those of other tribes in the same area, the external appearance of the medicine-man and his assistants denotes the great importance given to ritual details and

171 accessories. The performers wear red wool frontlets trimmed
105 with feathers on their heads, on their waists are feather belts, and rattles are tied on their feet. The magical power is attributed to every ornament, a belief less apparent among other Indians. So far as I know the Matako are the only Chaco tribe in which the medicine-men use narcotics. They use as snuff a powder made from the seeds of the *sebil* and through its use produce a state of trance during which their souls wander through the upper world. They wage collective war against disease and spirits and all of the ceremonies have a highly symbolical character. The Matako are very keen observers of taboos, mourning, for instance, is to them a very serious matter. This general interest in religion and the stress of religious beliefs in the native culture reveals itself in the Matako attitude toward Christianity. It is the general opinion of all of the missionaries with whom I discussed the question that the Matako are most eager to accept protestantism and that those who take the new faith do so seriously. They are not only interested in the exterior manifestations of religion, but they understand perfectly the moral problems and the subtilities of faith. The Matako who ask for baptism do so because they feel a genuine need for religion and the converted Indians do their best to adapt their living to new rules. The attitude of the Toba is quite different. They are amused by religion, they realize the help to be obtained from the missionaries, but they do not worry over much about the faith itself. They are light-hearted and and apathetic toward religion. The contrast between the two tribes has always impressed me and I noticed it immediately when I started to inquire about medicine-men. Information proffered by the Matako was always more detailed and extensive than that given by the Toba. The importance of religion to the Matako is not only revealed in spiritual crises; in the soul of a new convert modern religion affects his old life deeply.

000 I am aware that the ethnological material I gathered

Mataco Cultural Summary

Orientation

105 The Mataco (Mataguagos, Noctenes, or Huenneyei) are a small tribe of the Argentine-Bolivian Gran Chaco. The Mataco are similar in many respects to the other groups in the Chaco area, particularly the nearby Toba-Pilagá. The Mataco are notable particularly for their ceremonial life. Their language is closely related to Choroti.

The Chaco area is one of the most inhospitable in South America and has not been fully explored to this day. The climate is subtropical with considerable variation in rainfall and temperature. During the period of rains in the mountains the rivers may rise 20 or more feet above normal. The temperature frequently goes over 110° F. in the shade during this season. Despite the constant threat of floods and unbearable temperatures the Chaco itself gets little more than sporadic thundershowers during the "rainy" season and drought is the prime problem of the native agriculturalists. The western portion of the Chaco is covered with tropical rain forest, while the eastern portion is open scrub with patches of palms and other trees.

Pelleschi (599: 1896) reported an early missionary account that gave the figure of 20,000 for the Mataco. There are no figures available for the Mataco at present, but it is likely that a few thousand still survive.

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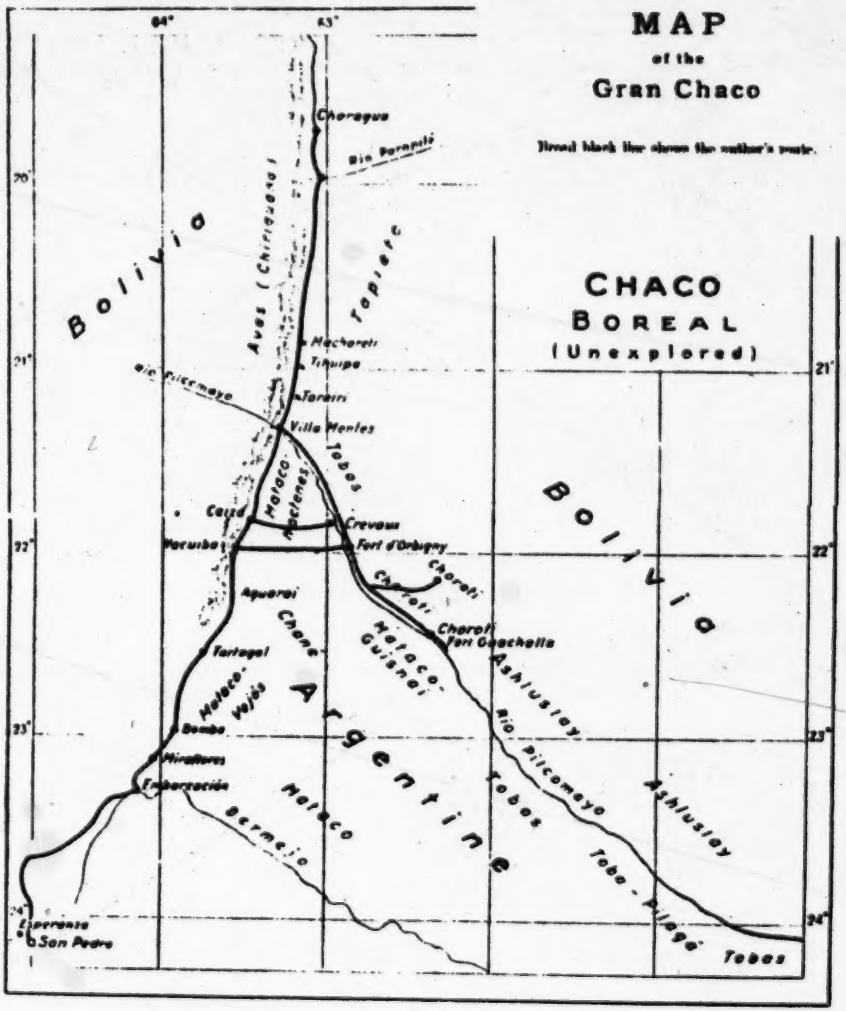

105 Karsten (28: 1932) described the Mataco as sturdy, slightly taller than the Choroti, and with coarse black hair, flat nose, and dark-brown eyes.

There are three Mataco groups. The northern Argentine group is called Vejós and is highly acculturated. The second group, called Mataco-Guisnay, lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo south of Fortín Guachalla. The third group, called Mataco-Nocténes, occupies an area between Yaguiba, Villa Montes, and Crevaux and is the least acculturated. The Mataco have been more exposed to white contact than any other Chaco group. Despite initial culture shock they are among the most adaptable Indian groups on record.

Economy

The Mataco practice a very limited agriculture due in part to the unfavorable ecological situation. Squash is perhaps their most prominent crop plant. Beans, watermelon, manioc, and maize are also grown.

Far more important to the Mataco are the wild fruits, particularly the algarrobo, which may be fairly described as their staple. Algarrobo is preserved during the harvest season for later use. Various wild roots and seeds are also collected. Wild honey is avidly sought after.

• 105 Fishing, often with nets, is the single most important economic activity, with the occasional surplus dried and stored. Hunting is also practiced and tapir, deer, wild pig, and miscellaneous small animals are utilized.

Sheep, goats, and fowls are kept but do not have great economic importance.

Like most peoples who live primarily by hunting and gathering, the Mataco are accustomed to periods when little food is available, and to gorging themselves when a supply is found. Almost anything that moves or ever has moved is considered edible, although fish is the favorite.

The Mataco weave fabrics, nets, and baskets. Ceramics of good quality are made. Canoes are made from a single tree trunk with the aid of bone and shell tools. Stone is not available in the area for tool making.

Formerly the men did not wear even as much as a breech clout and the women wore only animal skins. Fabric jackets are now sometimes worn. A waist cloth is now the standard single item for men, with the addition of a blanket in cold weather. Women wear a sort of sarong with the body naked from the waist up except in areas of mission influence, where a loose gown has become standard. Children go entirely naked until the age of eight or ten.

Settlements

105 The aboriginal Mataco house is a circular hut built casually with saplings, canes, or whatever material is available, and covered with rushes, grass, or palm leaves. The huts must be entered on hands and knees and are too low for a man to stand upright. Contemporary natives build houses patterned after those of the white settlers.

A village consists of six to twelve of these structures arranged in a rough circle around an open area reserved for sheep and goats and for occasional games or ceremonials. Settlements are always located near a water supply and pasturage, as well as in proximity to a source of the wild fruits on which they depend. The entire settlement can be abandoned on short notice when conditions favor a move to another area. One reason for moving is when the vermin population becomes too oppressive for even the tolerant Mataco. Several deaths in a village will result in the whole place being put to the torch, and the entire group will move to a fresh area. Individual Mataco will also occasionally simply leave and join another group.

A village as a rule is composed of people who are related to one another. There is no real political authority. An elder who is considered unusually wise may have some authority over the village. When such a chief dies the village elders assemble and elect a new chief. In the event of hostilities with an outside group a war chief

105 for the village may be selected and in case of war involving several villages a council of allied chiefs may come into existence.

Acculturated Mataco villages have developed the cacique system. The cacique has very much more power than the aboriginal chiefs, particularly with regard to judiciary functions. The principal function of the chief at present is to act as agent for the tribe in dealings with the whites. The chief is also expected to mediate differences between local groups.

Religion

The Mataco, except for the mission natives, are pagan. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mataco is their extraordinarily elaborate ceremonial and cosmological beliefs. The Mataco believe in an upper and lower world. The upper world has two compartments, the earth and the sky. The underworld is the abode of the dead. There is a great flood legend whose origin is uncertain.

One of the major ceremonial activities is prevention of disease. Tattooing with soot or ashes and bleeding and scarification are regarded as effective magic against disease. Sacred ornaments are also regarded as effective.

Diseases are regarded as the manifestations of evil spirits (nahút), and are most frequently believed to be the result of witchcraft.

105 Incantations, dancing, noise making, and sucking out the evil object are techniques of the shaman. Some herb medicines are used, most often in the form of poultices.

Spirits inhabit many natural objects, and plants and animals. There are in addition "free-floating" spirits which are associated with thunder and lightning, etc. Some of these spirits are good, others are evil.

At all ceremonial occasions such as weddings, dancing, drum playing, drinking, and chanting are part of the effort to drive off bad spirits. Prayers are also addressed to guardian spirits for supernatural aid.

A final type of ceremonial is that for ensuring good fishing, hunting, or harvest. The ceremonial to ensure the algaroba harvest is one of the most prominent.

Marriage

Villages are exogamous since most villagers are more or less closely related. Most marriages are contracted between persons from different villages of the same subtribe. Polygyny is rare. Girls are considered marriageable at twelve to fourteen and there is a marked shortage of marriageable females. Bride service is customary. Residence is at the bride's family until the bride service is completed, and then the couple may move to the husband's

105 village. Following the birth of a child, residence is matrilocal. The mother of the prospective bride has the final authority as to the choice of a husband.

Wives are subject to beatings from their husbands if they are caught in illicit affairs. This, however, seems to have little effect, since Mataco women are apt to have at least one lover. Unfaithfulness may lead to divorce, but since women are scarce such activity is sometimes overlooked.

Kinship

Descent, according to Karsten (49: 1932), is matrilineal, though the father's relatives are recognized. Terminology is of the Hawaiian type. The mother's family is the primary relationship group, and men are identified with their wife's clan, if married, and with their mother's if single.

Life Cycle

The Mataco woman is traditionally the more aggressive sexually. Premarital sex is fairly open and quite permissive. Girls who have had sexual intercourse the night before paint their faces red. Sex during marriage has several taboos associated. For example, couples are supposed to abstain from sexual activity from the time a child is born until it has teeth.

105 Infanticide and abortion are practiced by unmarried females.

At childbirth, the mother is assisted by a midwife and the father. The Mataco practice a limited form of the couvade, that is, the father does not go to bed, but is expected to refrain from any sort of activity.

Many complicated ceremonials are utilized following childbirth to ward off evil from the mother and child. Names are bestowed by the father when the child is one to three years old. These names often stem from dreams.

Children are allowed considerable freedom and are often carried about by the mother. Infants are breast fed until about one year and are then gradually weaned. Children are rarely punished or reprimanded.

No particular ceremony is attached to boys attaining puberty, but girls are the center of feasts, dances, beer-drinking, and religious rituals when their first menstruation occurs.

Children are trained by observing the activities of their elders, especially in fishing and hunting.

Sexual relationships and marriage have been outlined above.

The attainment of majority is recognized with the insertion of wooden plugs into slots in the ears.

The elderly are regarded as having special magical powers. The old are generally well-treated though early accounts say that the

105 elderly, along with cripples, were often left behind or even killed.

Conclusion

The Mataco have a relatively primitive culture, based on hunting and gathering. They have a meager material culture since as semi-nomads they do not accumulate possessions. Their ceremonial is fairly elaborate, however, for a people in this stage of development. They had, aboriginally, an almost complete lack of political integration even at the village level. Modern influences have led to a modification of this political and social pattern.

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105 113 Karsten, Rafael. Indian Tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco. Societas Scientarum Fennica, Vol. 4. Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1932.

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Pelleschi, Juan. Los Indios Matacos y su Lengua. Boletin del Instituto Geografico Argentino, Vol. 17, pp. 559-622; Vol. 18, pp. 173-350. Buenos Aires: 1896. [HRAF translation by Sydney Muirden.]

1: Pelleschi, Juan. Los Indios Matacos y su Lengua [The Mataco Indians and Their Language]. Introduction by Samual A. Lafone Quevedo. Boletín del Instituto Geográfico Argentino, Vol. 17, pp. 559-622; Vol. 18, pp. 173-350. Buenos Aires: 1896.

[HRAF MS: pp. i-iii, 1-193]

University of Michigan: G 5 B9

[Translated from the Spanish for the Human Relations Area Files by Sidney Muirden.]

[This work was originally published in Italian and reorganized and expanded with the assistance and approval of the original author for its appearance in Spanish. The introduction presents commentary on and quotation from various early writers on the Mataco and near-by tribes; this part is largely historical in nature with brief notes and summary statements on the cultures encountered by the early missionaries in the area. The second section, by Pelleschi, is on the Mataco culture with occasional reference to other tribes or to the culture of the general area. The author includes chapters on geography, physical and ethnic characteristics, the appearance and activities of the women, marriage and birth customs, fermented beverages and the use

1: Pelleschi, Juan

of various plants, warfare, religion, funeral practices, native doctors, and "social matters" -- the latter consisting of brief notes on many aspects of the culture. The third section, or Part Two of the main text, consists of Pelleschi's analysis of his notes on the Mataco language. He includes observations on the grammar, phonology, vocabulary and semantics of the language, but his treatment is that of a careful and interested observer rather than one trained in linguistics. Although the author gives much valuable information, his presentation is hardly exhaustive according to modern standards. Pages 275-350 of the Spanish text consist of a Mataco vocabulary which has not been translated into English; these pages and the end maps will be found only in category 116 with the rest of the foreign text. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1875 Evaluation: Civil Engineer-5
Analyst: George R. Bedell Processed in 1959

2: Karsten, Rafael. Indian Tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco: Ethnological Studies. Societas Scientarum Fennica, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, Vol. 4, No. 1. Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1932.

Pp. x, 236; illustrations; 10 text figures end map.

Yale: F12 F49 4

Pp. 206-230 on the Toba were not processed for the SI7 Mataco file.

[This is a general source on the culture of the Mataco, Toba and Choroti Indians of the northern Gran Chaco by a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Helsingfors. The author had considerable previous field experience among South American Indian groups. Material is included on general cultural characteristics and material culture, social organization, life cycle, education, warfare, trade and visiting, and religion. The emphasis throughout is upon the religious side of the life of these groups with Karsten usually commenting on what he thinks various elements of custom mean to them. The distribution studies of Nordenskiöld are criticized. Since data on the three groups are inextricably

2: Karsten, Rafael.

mixed on most pages, these data have been marked only for the Mataco. Otherwise these data have been subheaded for Toba SI12 and Choroti SK6. -- Analyst]

Field date: 1911-1913
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1958

3: Métraux, Alfred. Myths and Tales of the Matako Indians (The Gran Chaco, Argentina). Ethnological Studies, Vol. 9, pp. 1-127. Gothenburg, Sweden: Walter Kaudern, 1939.

Yale: Nk10 Et42 v.6-10

[Métraux took down these tales and myths during an interval in his field trip to study the Toba and Pilaga. His interviews were short and casual, and mainly limited to two informants. He had frequent opportunities to ask questions about matters touched upon in the tales. The tales are divided into groups concerning; the universe, the destruction of the world, the trickster and his adventures, spirits, the origin of women, fire and mythical characters, animals, and tales of European origin, or with predominant European elements. There is a series of notes appended to the tales relating to various aspects of the ethnography of the Mataco as suggested by the tales. The table of contents will be found in category 116, pp. 123-127. Notes to the myths will be found in category 116, pp. 90-123. At the time of his field work Métraux was an ethnologist on the staff of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu. --Analyst]

Field date: 1933 Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary Processed in 1958

4: Metraux, Alfred. Nota Etnografia sobre los Indios Mataco del Gran Chaco Argentino [Report on the Ethnography of the Mataco Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco]. Relaciones de la Sociedad Argentina de Antropologia, Vol. 4, pp. 7-18. Buenos Aires: 1944.

Yale: C52 586 3-4

HRAF manuscript: pp. i, 11.

[Translated from the Spanish for the Human Relations Area Files by Sydney Muirden.]

[Metraux visited the Mataco in 1939 with the intention of doing a full-scale study, but was prevented by sickness from doing so. This source is a publication of some of his field notes from this trip. Data are included on birth and infancy, abortion and infanticide, marriage, the functions of the chief, religious beliefs, the witch doctors, magic, and the belief on the reality of dreams. Metraux is a well-known French-Argentine ethnographer.--Analyst]

Field date: 1939 Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary Processed in 1959

5: Fock, Niels. Mataco Marriage. Folk, Dansk Etnografisk Tidsskrift, Vol. 5, pp. 91-101. København: Danish Ethnographical Association, 1963.

Personal copy of T. O'Leary.

[This source is a detailed, functional study of marriage procedure, married life, and the termination of marriage among the Mataco of Argentina. The author illustrates how the marriage system is directly related to the economic and occupational system of the Mataco. --Analyst]

Field date: 1962
Analyst: Millicent Kim

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1964

6: Métraux, Alfred. Suicide Among the Matako of the Argentine Gran Chaco. America Indigena, Vol. 3, pp. 199-209. Mexico, D. F.: Instituto Indigenista Americano, 1943.

Yale: C51. In8c. 3.

[This article deals with the high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians in the missions. After giving ten case histories the author discusses the motives involved, the relation of suicide attempts to personality traits and to the existing acculturation situation.

While in the field Métraux observed only one case and most of his information was obtained from the English missionaries in the area. -- Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1963.

7: Dijour, Élisabeth. Les Cérémonies d'Expulsion des Maladies chez les Matako /Ceremonies for the Expulsion of Illnesses among the Mataco/. Journal de la Société des Américanistes, n.s., Vol. 25, pp. 211-218. Paris, 1933.

2 end plates (VIII-IX).

Yale: C51 +So13 II. 25-26. /HRAF MS. pp. 1-12 including plates./

Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Priscilla Reynolds.

[During the years 1932-1933 when the author was in charge of a mission to the Argentinian Chaco, she was able to observe at first-hand several ceremonies for the expulsion of illness or evil spirits, both from the village itself (which she describes in the first part of this source), and for various individuals (the descriptions of the ceremonies of which occupy the remainder of the work). Additional explanatory notes are appended by the author at the end of each ceremony described above./

Field date: 1932-1933
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1966

8: Moore, Frank W. Mataco Cultural Summary. Unpublished manuscript. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1965.

Pp. 10; 1 map (typescript)

HRAF copy

/This source is a summary of the contents of the Mataco file as of late 1964. Dr. Moore is a professional anthropologist and executive director of HRAF. ---Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 4
Processed in 1965

Campana, Domenico del. Contributo all' Etnografia dei Matacco. Archivio per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia, v. 43, pp. 305-325. Florence: 1913.

Yale: Nk10. A r28 43

[This source contains material on religion, rituals and legends. Since it seems to be a purely secondary source, using Pelleschi and others, it has not been processed for the SI7 Mataco file. --Analyst]

Hunt, Rev. R.J. Mataco-English and English-Mataco Dictionary (with grammatical notes). Etnologiska Studier, Vol. 5, pp. 1-98. Goteberg: Walter Kaudern, 1937.

Yale: Nk10 Et42 v.1-5

[This source, by a member of the South American Missionary Society, is mainly a lexicon of the Vejoz dialect of the Mataco Indians living on the Rio Bermejo. The grammatical notes are based on Latin grammatical categories and not on the Mataco. Little cultural information is contained in the lexicon. For these reasons, this source has not been processed for the Mataco file.--Analyst]

Lehmann-Nitsche, Robert. La Astronomia de los Matacos. Revista del Museo de la Plata, Vol. 27 (Third Series, Vol. 3), pp. 252-266. Buenos Aires: Imprenta y Casa Editora "Coni," 1923.

Yale: Argentina A62ℓ 050 27

[This source contains materials concerning Mataco beliefs on eclipses, the sun and the moon, meteorological phenomena, the stars, and various constellations. Much of the material is contained in other sources processed for this file.--Analyst]

Pelleschi, Giovanni. Eight Months on the Gran Chaco of the Argentine Republic. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1886.

Pp. xvi, 311.

Yale: Argentina Ehi C34 879P

[This is an account of the travels of an official of the Civil Engineers' Service in the Argentine Republic some time during the late 1870's. Since much the same material is covered in more detail in 1: Pelleschi, this source has not been processed for the Mataco file.--Analyst]

113, 102

Chane SF8
Choroti SK7
Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4
Toba SI12
Tapiete SK13
Siriono SF21

/For the map showing the location and distribution of these tribal groupings, see 4: Nino, SF10 Chiriguano, category 116, pp. 447-452./

113, 143

Chiriguano SF10
Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Tehuelche SH5
Caraja SP9
Tucano SQ19
Guarani SM4
Timbira SQ8
Araucanians SG4
Paez SC15
Canari SD4
Jivaro SD9
Aymara SF5
Ona SH4
Yahgan SH6

/For information on genic locations based on Streng's diagram of co-ordinates of the blood groups of the natives of South America, see: 4: Hill et al., 8818 Warao, Category 116, pp. 107-114./

105 elderly, along with cripples, were often left behind or even killed.

Conclusion

The Mataco have a relatively primitive culture, based on hunting and gathering. They have a meager material culture since as semi-nomads they do not accumulate possessions. Their ceremonial is fairly elaborate, however, for a people in this stage of development. They had, aboriginally, an almost complete lack of political integration even at the village level. Modern influences have led to a modification of this political and social pattern.

References

105 Karsten, Rafael. Indian Tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco. Societas Scientarum Fennica, Vol. 4. Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1932.

●113

Metraus, Alfred. Myths and Tales of the Matako Indians. Ethnological Studies. Gothenburg Ethnological Museum, Gothenburg: 1939.

_____. Nota Ethnografia Sobre los Indios Mataco del Gran Chaco Argentino. Relaciones de la Sociedad Argentina de Antropologia. Vol. 4, pp. 7-18. Buenos Aires: 1944. [HRAF translation by Sydney Muirden.]

Pelleschi, Juan. Los Indios Matacos y su Lengua. Boletin del Instituto Geografico Argentino, Vol. 17, pp. 559-622; Vol. 18, pp. 173-350. Buenos Aires: 1896. [HRAF translation by Sydney Muirden.]

Los Indios Matacos y su Lengua
[The Mataco Indians and their Language]

by
Juan Pelleschi (Engineer)
with an introduction by
Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo, M.A.

Part I

Preliminary Introduction

114

Before Mr. Juan Pelleschi published his interesting and painstaking book "Ocho Meses en el Gran Chaco" [Eight Months in the Gran Chaco] the language of the Matacos was practically unknown, although it was common knowledge that many tribes spoke it. It is hard to understand how this language could have disappeared so completely without leaving so much as a trace in the archives of the Jesuit Fathers; but the fact is that even at the beginning of the past century Father Machoni himself complained about the loss of grammars and vocabularies of the Tonocoté language, with which language I identify the Mataco-Mataguayo tongue [797] and which was the language used by the Jesuit missionaries to indoctrinate and evangelize these Indians.

In the early part of this century Hervás and Adelung, the former with his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" [Catalogue of Languages] the latter with his "Mithridates," were able to mention only the name of the language, as though to have on record that they were aware of its existence, but they lamented that they had been unable to secure a single fact in regard to it, not even a Pater Noster with which to illustrate their extremely sparse knowledge of this interesting group of languages spoken by countless Indians, (that is to say by Chaco Indians). The fact is that some time later the scholarly French traveler Alcides d'Orbigny, took

[128]

Translator's Note: The Spanish word "cristiano" when used as a noun which literally means "Christian" has been translated throughout as "white man" or "white," since the translator feels that this is really closer to its basic meaning. "Non-Indian" might have been used instead but it seemed cumbersome and did not carry with it the tone of superiority which both "cristiano" in Spanish and "white" in English (however unfortunately) carry.

●114 back to France a short but useful vocabulary of Vejoz, a dialect of the Matacos living near the river Zeta or Oran, but this [560] document remained in obscurity among that author's papers in the National Library of Paris until it was found by Mr. Luciano Adam, who was kind enough to send it to me at Pilciao.

114 Without knowing anything about the language of the Mataco
126 Indians, completely free from prejudice regarding both the Indians and their language, and intent upon finding out what he could at first hand, Mr. Pelleschi traveled into the Chaco in the manner which he so picturesquelly describes, capping his work with a linguistic treatise in which he re-discovered (may I be allowed the expression) the language of the Uicquii, whom we call Matacos and Mataguayos. The author cuts himself free from all preconceived notions as to grammatical rules of the "sum, es, fuit," type and writes down what he hears, not once, but a thousand times, until he discovers the part of speech to which, according to our way of thinking, the word he was treating corresponded, together with its other accidental characteristics. In the very same order in which he came upon them he sets them down in his travel notebook, in such a way that Mr. Pelleschi allows us to take part in his discoveries and we can delight with him in each new find.

000 Unfortunately for us the book was written in Italian. Doctor José Gutiérrez, friend of the author and warmly interested in these matters, had died, and there was therefore lacking one who would take an active interest in the book, which was, nevertheless, a revelation regarding the study of Argentine languages. Thus it was that the book remained of interest only to bibliophiles, among whom was General Mitre, and it is to him that I owe my first introduction to this meritorious and extremely interesting work.

After reading the book I resolved to make the author's acquaintance, since it dawned on me, in half an hour's perusal, that information of this type is not set down without copious notes, and I realized that there was an important drawback to the work, which was the lack of a vocabulary which might serve as background and complement to the Grammatical Essay covering the last few chapters.

It was not hard to find a mutual friend, and in 1889 there began a relationship which has yielded me many hours of real pleasure and satisfaction.

000 It is hardly necessary to say that as soon as the first polite conventional exchanges were over with, we plunged into the matter of our common interest, and that Mr. Pelleschi allowed me to see his portfolios, which I emptied of three quarters of their contents before retiring to my house at Pilciao in Andalgalá de Catamarca [561]. Ensconced there with my assistant and secretary Ramón Martínez, we set to work coordinating and ordering the vocabulary and sentence lists with an eye to publishing the result at some future date, always provided that the owner of the notes would permit such a thing.

Mr. Pelleschi and I used to see each other every so often, and when we were far apart, we would write. I used to urge him to publish something further, and he would promise to do so whenever his many occupations should give him respite. Later on we became involved in the politico-commercial occurrences of the years 1889 to 1893, and could only return to the matter at hand at long intervals. Finally, in April of the latter year, in odd moments, and amid other matters which concerned everything but linguistics, I was able to finish the outline of the work which is here published, with the introduction approximately as it now stands, but with Pelleschi's section lacking that fourth part which I had not yet copied.

All the manuscripts were sent to my friend Mr. Pelleschi and he pointed out the flaws contained in what I sent him.

The crisis of 1890 and the subsequent disturbances at the La Plata Museum had postponed publication of my papers on linguistics in the magazine put out by that institution and therefore all my material was held up, among which was our Mataco manuscript. Pelleschi also was busy with other prior commitments, railroad work, etc. In 1893 Mr. J. B. Ambrosetti, on behalf of the Boletín del Instituto Geográfico [Bulletin of the Geographic Institute], offered us space in that worthy magazine, and the work on material gathered on the subject of Argentine Languages went ahead. The schedule was to be as follows: The Lule Tonocoté [language] by Machoni, the Vilela [language] according to Pelleschi and others; and the Mataco Mataguayo group, the first part of which was to be Pelleschi's work.

When it came to Pelleschi's turn, he asked for more time, and so the manuscript remained in the files.

● 114 By pure chance it happened that in the interim three very important documents were brought to my attention, having to do with the Argentine Mataco as well as the Bolivian Mataco, and there was nothing for it but to use them to fill the gap left us by Pelleschi's missing work.

●114 The first of those documents was the result of correspondence with the Fathers of the Franciscan convent of Tarija, and it was published in this same [562] Bulletin of the Geographic Institute under the name of "Nocten," by Father Inocencio Massei; the second document was the above mentioned one of d'Orbigny, and the third the Mataco of Father Remedi of the Salta Convent. All these works hark back to the notes made by the Missionary Fathers of the Seraphic Order, and are of great value because they stem from an extended stay among the Indians, and although the Indians are more or less reserved in matters of abusiones (1) as they call them, they are more apt to speak openly

1. Superstitions

to those wearing the habit of Saint Francis than to any other christian.

000 These monographs, as they were published, were sent to Mr. Pelleschi, partly because of the warm friendship we had for each other and partly because they might be of service, as the memories of La Madrid has been in the case of Paz's writings (2), in precipitating his

2. According to the version told me by Doctor Andrés Lamas.

work on the same subject. Let my friend say what he will, he must needs confess that these treatises inspired him, particularly when he compared them to his own notes, and found how well his observations agreed with them. The outcome was that we agreed to meet in the present year, 1896, in which he was returning from Europe and I was going down to Buenos Aires from my home in the Valle de Londres. Once having got together in this city we applied ourselves to the matter of our common interest for some eight or ten hours per week during a period of four months, until we were able to turn in the manuscript for publication.

Pelleschi had good reason not to wish to tackle the problem of his field notes alone—not that he was not capable of doing so if he set himself to it, but because it is a difficult matter to copy words such as these and distribute them properly without some intelligent help in the matter, for it all becomes confusion and doubt for one who does not have some sound principle to guide him.

Historical References

I

127 If we were to affirm that the Matacos or Mataguayos are first mentioned in the writings of the Missionary Fathers, we would expose ourselves to correction when, at some future date, the archives of our motherland be better known. However, lacking such facts, and without having the work of Father Salinas at hand, I must necessarily begin by setting down what Father Techo says in his Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay [History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay].

175 Refer to volume I, chapters 40 to 43 etc., which include the years 1590, 1591 and 1592.

In the first of these years Fathers Pedro Añasco and Juan Fonte arrived at Tucuman, at the same time that the famous and apostolic Father Alonso Bárcena was evangelizing the Lules, those on the slopes of (Mount) Aconquija, not those under Father Machoni's care. Father Bárcena, full of good works, toiled without ceasing among those belligerent Indians, underfed and in imminent danger of losing his life, but undismayed for all that, so much so that when called to order by his superior he answered with these noble and heart felt words [Latin parallel text omitted. See foreign text--Translator]: "I shall go to you as soon as possible, Father, and at your feet I shall say: Here I am; send me, be it that you return me to the Lules, or to the Calchaquíes, to the Chaquenses or the Frontones, or to the uttermost *ends of the earth, for I desire with an insatiable longing* to be sent where I may suffer all things in behalf of those souls who are to be saved."

It is quite apparent here that the good Father differentiated be-
●[114] tween Lules, Calchaquíes, Chaquenses and Frentones. In my opinion the Chaquenses were the Mataraes, Matacos or Mataguayos who spoke the Tonocoté language. [564]

II

The Matará People

In chapter 41 Father Techo goes on to tell how the Spaniards founded the city of Concepción del Bermejo, 30 leagues from the point

175 a half, Alonso Bárcena, an old man 65 years of age, on fire with zeal
797 to win souls for Christ, sharing his studies with Pedro Agnasco, learned the Guarany, Natica, Quisoquina, Abipona, and Quiranguica languages, and put together vocabularies, grammars, doctrinal teachings and sermons, each for its respective use. Both of these men, before leaving Tucuman, had mastered and worked out a grammar and lexion of the Tonocoté, Kakana, Paquina and Quirandica languages, so that the Fathers who might be about to enter districts where these languages were spoken would have the way made easier. And in order that their usefulness be more widely disseminated Pedro Agnasco transcribed most of them many times, particularly the work which Alonso
MC Bárcena had done, in a very neat hand, and, thus copied out, he gave them out for general use."

114 We have here a series of very interesting facts, for not only do we learn to distinguish between one tongue and another, but we discover also the origin of that valuable Toba MS, which is at present in General Mitre's library, attributed to Father Bárcena, and which actually is very neatly written, and was not in the least bit troublesome when a transcription of it had to be made for the series on Argentine Languages. The two famous notebooks, although hardly full enough to learn Toba from, are invaluable, because they allow us to see the Toba spoken in 1592.

The chapter referred to ends with a well deserved eulogy of Fathers Bárcena and Agnasco. How many evil things can be accounted to the expulsion of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus! To that event we owe the many gaps in the chain of American languages [567]. The confusion and loss of documents was widespread, calamitous and even down to the present day we are lacking those grammars of the Kaka and Tonocoté languages which are of so much interest to history, ethnology and linguistics.

IV

MT 175 797 The Mission to the Frentones, time lost and other Matará matters.

Devoratis tot linguarum difficultatibus, says Father Techo in chapter 44. The missionaries began their efforts toward the Frentones via

M T 175 797

the Mogosnas and Naticas. "Verum (nevertheless), Deum immortalem, quo successu?" The Mogosnas had killed Francisco Vera de Aragon, the Frentones were in a state of great turmoil, and the Fathers had no other recourse but to return to their base mission among the Matarães. On that occasion no good was harvested from so much effort expended on learning the languages of the Frentones; but linguistics as a whole did gain something, and once again the Fathers of the Company gave evidence that for them martyrdom was glory.

In 1596 Gaspar Monroy and Juan Viana visited the Tonocotés and traversed the territory previously evangelized by Father Bárcena. (Techo, "Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay," L. II, cap. 8). [Techo, History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, Vol. II, Chap. 8].

In 1608 Father Diego Torres essayed to traverse these districts, and regarding this journey Father Techo recounts the following in Book III, Chapter 28 [Parallel Latin text omitted--Translator]. "The state of the Frentones was a sad one, for they wished nothing other than to continue in their perverse customs, dominated by the enemy of the human race. And on seeing them spread out in their forays to the very frontiers of Perú, and on becoming aware that the Abipones, Matacos, Naticas, Mogosnas, and Tonocotés, nations related to the Frentones, were bound in the same captivity because of lack of priests, he felt himself constrained, following the example of Saint Xavier, to return to Europe and, in the Universities of Spain and Italy, to try by dint of exhortation to awaken among the students a feeling of compassion toward such peoples." [568]

M T 114

This quote is an important one, for even if we cannot be sure that Father Techo used the [Latin] term "agnatas" in its true and restricted meaning—relatives on the father's side—he has nevertheless given us a piece of ethnic-linguistic information of great importance and which he doubtless had from some well-informed person. If the Tonocotes, Mátaguas and Mataguayos are our present day Matacos it is clear that they must have had ethnic and linguistic affinities with the other nations of the Guaicurú type, as will later on be demonstrated.

The peaceableness of the Matarães contrasted with the extreme fierceness of the Frentones is remarkable. This difference must be attributed to atavism, and from it we shall be able to derive something of interest, as will be seen later.

that they would rather die of starvation than eat a morsel of a fish of that kind. They live in a state of perpetual war, both among themselves and with the neighboring nations, which seem terrible to the outsider more on account of their cruelty than of their scope." This is an invaluable statement for both the ethnologist and the filologist. The mention made of the Aymará tongue confirms what I have suspected regarding the linguistic contact between the Aymaras and the Chaquenses of the Mocoví type. It is a pity that the careful Father does not say who those Indians were who spoke Aymará.

Lozano recounts in Book IV, Chapter 1, the following: that about the year 1532 there was a great drouth in Tucumán. The doleful natives consulted their witchdoctors. These latter painted a grim picture of what was to come, and many, giving credence to these prophecies, went off "towards the Province of the Chaco, where their miserable descendants eke out an existence etc."

It is clear then that the tradition regarding those large migrations to the Chaco is one of long standing and acceptance; but that does not mean necessarily that all the Indians which are to be found there are the progeny of a single invasion. Above all else we must bear in mind what Garcilazo de la Vega says in his Historia [History].

It appears that the Taimvias must have been the Lenguas, Payaguáes etc. who wore the button or "tembetá." This word probably derives from the Guaraní "tembé"—the lower lip—which is the one disfigured with these ornaments or lip plugs. Just as the term Orejones ["oreja" means "ear"--Translator] is applied to all those who use a disc or circular piece in that part of their anatomy, and Frentones are those who shave off the hair on the fore part of their heads, so also was the name Lenguas given to those who use lip plugs.

The Mosovias are the Moscovies, since "cc" [570] (strong guttral) becomes "s" by a process of degeneration; and that is why we find Father Tavolini spelling it Moscovitas.

Here again Mataguayo and Tonocoté tribes are brought together with others of the Toba-Mocoví type, with the warning, "diversitate linguarum quam moribus dissimiliores." This is a fact, as will be seen later; but I can say now, by way of anticipation, that it proves for us that the Mataco language is the result of linguistic hybridization in which the lexicon stems from one lineage and the grammatical usage from another.

M 175 read in the same place that the most commonly used language in the Chaco was the Tonocoté, that it was not Toba or the language of Cuzco, for it says there that "Father Juan Oloris knew the language of the Incas, and was learning Tonocoté, which was the language of the Chaco mission."

VIII

What Father Lozano Says

M 114 128 What precedes has been extracted from the work of Father Techo. I shall now do likewse with the Descripción Chorográfica [Chorographic Description] of the Chaco written by Father Lozano and published in Córdoba in 1733.

This authorretold most of what Father Techo had written in this regard, but also added many details of interest which illustrate the former text and serve to eliminate some doubts. In this chapter I shall set down all that Lozano has said about the Matacos or Mataguayos, and the references will be to the pages of the book written by this priest.

Speaking of the Paraná river, page 25, he says: "The region which this great river waters in the Chaco is inhabited by the infidel Abipones, some Mocovíes who fled from the Salta frontier, and the Callagaes, who at one time used to be called Matarães."

Father Lozano devotes pages 39 and 51 to recounting the tradition, which he relates in his history of Tucumán, [regarding Indian migration under Spanish pressure--Translator] to explain the cause for the Chaco's dense population. Undoubtedly the Chaco was the apparent refuge [573] for the more belligerent Indians and for those in revolt, and it is probable that what was happening then was a repetition of the numberless previous migrations of a like kind. Those who were dissatisfied and answered to the Inca also fled to the Chacos.

M 175 On page 51 Lozano gives a list of the nations inhabiting the Chaco from which I shall extract the following by reason of its being relevant to this study: "Mataguayos ... Amulalaes, in times past called Matarás ... Tonocotés ... Chunipies ... Callages ...

"On the river Pilcomayo, at a distance of 40 leagues from the Andean mountains live the Tobas and Mataguayos, the two nations numbering about 4,000 members and who are eaters of human flesh." (page 53). As ever the Tobas live as close neighbors to the Matacos.

C M 175 462 [845] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the C M Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, [595] and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances C M towards a Spanish woman. . . .

175 "Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes [164] terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they C M usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, [764] those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while C M memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among [771] them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- C M spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may 175 do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. 756 These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

C M This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has 114 been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

XV

The Mataguayos

In the year 1884 the Reverend Father Alejandro María Covrado in collaboration with another missionary published in Florence certain Noticias Históricas [Historical Information] originating in the Franciscan College of Tarija and other missions, and in appendix L we find a very important account with reference to the Mataguayos which I shall quote: - page 535, etc. "The Mataguayos are spread over a vast region of the Chaco, especially the left bank of the Bermejo and the right bank of the Pilcomayo. On the Salta frontier they are commonly called Matacos, and Noctenes on the Tarija frontier, which is a corrupt form of Octenai, a name [592] given them by the Chiriguanos and which, in turn, appears to be a corruption of Huenneyei (1), which is what the

1. Plural of the word which means men.
(J. Pelleschi)

Matáguayos call themselves. By way of epilogue we shall give an account of what was reported, regarding the ways and customs of these savage tribes, by a missionary of this college who lived amongst them for many years:

"In their features and coloring the Mataguayos, Matacos or Noctenes, which are one and the same people, are very little different from the Chiriguanos. Their customs however are very different, and their languages absolutely so. Their villages are small, consisting usually of the several branches of only one family. They do not like to construct them in open places, preferring the dense forests and reed beds. The dwelling places are small huts made of branches or cane stuck in the ground, bent over and gathered at the ends, and covered with straw. On the inside they are similar to ovens; they are less than two meters high and their size is proportionate to the number of people to be housed in them. The ground passes for their bed, and is either quite bare or else covered with a mat of rushes or the skin of some animal. Cleanliness is utterly lacking. When the place gets to be full of fleas or other insects or filth they burn their hovels and build others not far off.

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[774] some animal according to its merits in this life. They also recognize
776 with the name Ohott-at (1) (great spirit) a superior being who created

1. "O'hot" = spiritness; "tat" and "taj" = augmentative (J.P.)

them, but they do not worship this being at all. They are in great fear of an evil being who, wandering about at night, harms man, for which reason they call it Onnescilele (2) (night wanderer) and commit

2. "Onne" (hunat) = night; "sci" = locative; "lêle" = patronimic (J.P.)

themselves to his service in order to win his good will."

XVI

Some Observations on the Previous Chapter

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● 114 The notes on appendix L written by Father Alejandro M.
101 Corrado are full of material of interest for this treatise. In them he establishes that "Matacos, Mataguayos and Noctenes are one and the same thing" explaining that in Salta they are called Matacos, and in Tarija Noctenes, while the Mataguayos themselves refer to themselves as Huenneyei.

According to the good Father the name Noctenes is a corruption of Octenai, a term used by the Chiriguayos to refer to these Indians. I find myself incompetent to argue this point about the origin of the name Noctenes; but since the Tobas and Guaycurûes owe it to the Guaranîes that they are known to us by their present names it would not be at all strange that a similar thing had happened in this case also.

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101 We are given to understand by this account that not everyone
114 calls the Mataguayos Noctenes, and one can understand that this is the cause of the disappearance of the Tonocoté nation. Tonocoté was a name limited to certain tribes only, but which doubtless was extended to many others, as far as language goes, because it was the first learned

M/T by the missionaries and because it served them well in catechising all 114 the members of the same language family.

101 Father Cardus writes Noctenes in such a way that the obtrusive "c" participates to a degree in the sound which the Mocovíes add to every [597] medial "t" (see "Mocoví Fonologia" [Mocoví Phonology]). Because of this variant we can see that the Mataco-Mataguayos could just as well be called Noctenes as Notenes.

From the sound of the name Tonocoté I would say that it is made up of Noctenes or Notenes plus the Chaquense and very Mataco prefix "to" which means "the." The final "n" is of Spanish influence and is merely indicative of nationality. A parallel to this is that we say Tobas when the actual root word is "obá"—face—because the Guaraní language attaches to all its nouns etc. a demonstrative prefix of relation which can be "t", "r", etc.

Hervas speaks of Toconotés, Techo and others of Tonocotés. To my way of seeing it the difference of opinion can be resolved in the following manner: "Noté" is the same as "Nocoté," and the prefixes "To" and "Toco" are also identical by way of the well known degeneration "Toco" "Toho" "To." I mention the latter because even though "Nocten" and "Noten" may agree exactly in that they refer to the same thing, the qualifying prefix need not necessarily be the same in both cases.

Until such time as some more reasonable explanation appears or some contrary one is put forward I claim that the terms Tonocoté, Toconoté, Nocten and Noten have identical lexical value.

Every student of the Guaraní and related Chaco languages must needs confess that "t" and "to" are never more than demonstrative prefixes. I do not deny that "Toco" may have a more concrete meaning, such as—Colorado, the Tenco River, etc. What matters is that recognition be given to the fact that the Noctenes or Notenes may be the To-nocotes of history. This would explain all the contradictions to be found in the writings of Machoni, Jolís and Hervas.

It is inconceivable that a nation as strong as the Tonocoté could have disappeared amidst so much else that has been preserved. It was the typical Mataco, Mataguayo, Matará etc. tribe which tradition says had exiled itself to the basin of the Pilcomayo—there we find Noctenes or Notenes, which are Matacos and Mataguayos. We are then in the position of having to confess that these Indians are, more or less, the Tonocotés of history, and that the name had been lost because it was a

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M nickname given them by neighboring nations who then stopped using
114 it. The name has cropped up again at the present time because the
10 missionaries have returned to those missions from the Chiriguano side and have adopted the name by which the latter usually referred to them.

Even if it were a matter of a name originating in the nation itself there would be some latitude in its transliteration, but the fact being that they are [598] nicknames invented by other Indians and heard and transcribed by the Spaniards allows of much greater freedom, and I do not believe that the hypothesis that the Noctenes of Father Corrado are the Tonocotés of Father Techo is so fantastic a one.

It may not be superfluous to note that the Indians whom we call Tobas call themselves by the name Tocouitt, which, compared to the other Mocouitt leaves as residue the word Toco which could be compared to the "Toco" or "To" of the Indans treated in this chapter. In the Toba and other allied languages the "C" is a false sound and the syncopation of syllables is the rule

XVII

What Father Cardús Has to Say About the Matacos, Mataguayos, etc.

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114 The Reverend Franciscan Father José Cardús published in Barcelona in 1886 his work entitled "Las Misiones Franciscanas" [The Franciscan Missions] of Bolivia in connection with the College of San José de Tarata. In it we find the following information about the Matacos (pages 250 to 258) which I shall quote, thus opening myself up to criticism for over prolixity, yet I feel I am justified because the information is important and credible since the missionaries write with exactness of what they have seen and known at close quarters.

I have not seen the Matacos and do not know them, and I am wary of allowing myself to be carried away by preconceived notions. Yet I must of necessity quote and not comment upon my authors who will thus say what they wish to say and not what some other person wishes them to say.

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chumupi-Vilelas.

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

114 It is strange that in the last two reports so much importance has been given to the Noctén tribes about which nothing is said by authors writing in colonial times. This in itself already tends to favor the hypothesis that the Noctenes may be the Tonocotés.

In this part of the continent it does not seem that there occurred that veritable extermination of whole tribes, such as was the case with the Charruas of Uruguay and we must therefore search about somewhere for the 60,000 and more Indians who understood or spoke the Tonocoté language. Among them were the Mataguayos, who exist down to the present day; it would be only natural, then, to affirm that Mataguayo is a dialect of Tonocoté, and since Noctén and Mataguayo are closely related dialects, it follows that Noctén is as much a dialect of Tonocoté as is Mataguayo.

In the following chapter I shall set forth a report which was sent to me by Father Eliseo Molina of the Franciscan College at Tarija. [609]

XIX

What Father Doroteo Giannecchini has to Say Regarding the Noctenes and Other Mataco Tribes

101 "The Noctenes, Matacos, Vejoses, Guiznaes, and Chulupies belong to one single nation, for all speak the same language and have the same customs."

184 "Such nations are differentiated by their name and by traits which I shall call provincial or local."

101 "Our Noctenes, for example, who are the ones who inhabit the country between the foot of the Pisapo mountain range and Pikírenda, 50 121 or 60 leagues to the east, are called Noctenes. In the vicinity of Pikírenda they take the name of Guiznaes; but they are of the same family as our Noctenes and are even related to them by blood."

"From Pikírenda onwards, some 30 leagues, more or less, and up to the Paraguay River they take the name of Chulupies; and along the whole right bank of the Pilcomayo River, from our first Noctén mission on to the Paraguay River, it is the same tribe: their

101 131 speech and customs are somewhat different, but in substance it is the same language, and they understand each other perfectly when each speaks in his own way."

"Across from the Colonia Crevaux, on the left bank towards the north there is another tribe called Chorotis which must originally have been a group captured by the Noctenes for their language is a true Mataco or Noctén dialect and many words are identical with Noctén words."

"It is true that these Chorotis live as unto themselves forming a separate tribe, but they are related to and have continual dealings with the Noctenes. Their pronunciation is, however, much clearer and more intelligible than that of the Noctenes."

"These same Noctenes are related to the Matacos of Oran and the Chaco, in which place the Noctenes are called Matacos, and the Matacos living between the left bank of the Oran River and the reservation in which we had a mission at the beginning of this century, take the name of Vejoses, and have their own local way of speaking the same language as the Noctenes and Matacos. Higher up, that is in our Bolivian Itiyuro, they again take the name of Matacos." [610]

[197] "The fact is then that they do not have what might be called a separate language—rather do they vary the pronunciation of certain terms which does not constitute a separate language but a local variation, as happens with the Spanish of Bolivians, Argentines, Chilians, etc., and between town and town, region and region."

This description was sent to me when I asked for a Pater-noster in Mataguayo, having already received one in Nocten.

● 114 All that has been transcribed in the previous chapters shows that in the opinion of the missionary fathers the typical tribe was the Nocten, and that this is the name they use where we would say Matacos and Mataguayos. It is to be understood, then, that Nocten is nothing but a corruption of the name Tonocoté or Toconoté, already mentioned.

XX

Geographic Distribution of Mataco-type Nations

101 131 From all that has been told us by the Fathers of the Company and of the Franciscan Missions it can be deduced that the Mataco tribes occupy a diagonal region which in times past extended from the basin

174 in these matters will give serious study to these skulls and in that way confirm my hypothesis based on what the languages themselves allow us to glimpse.

The ethnology of a given people, if it is to be of value, must
● 114 include the anthropology of that people. The language alone is insufficient because of the well known tendency to adopt foreign elements on both a large and a small scale.

I am sorry that I do not know as much as does Quatrefages; but if a man as eminent as he is has had to confess his ignorance in linguistic matters, much more so may I leave the question open until such time as the anthropological problems which Argentina poses to the authorities in that field, have been solved. I am satisfied to point out the paths which I believe I have found and to declare that judging by extant languages, everything in the Chaco is a mixed bag.

Further than this I do not dare to push my hypothesis. Let this quote from Quatrefages found in his "Hommes Fossiles et Hommes Sauvages" [Fossil Men and Savage Men] serve me as an excuse: "Furthermore in problems of this kind the physical characteristics are in every way more conclusive as evidence than all others. A nation can change in language, in customs, in industries, sometimes in a relatively short period; but height, skin, cranial shape—that cannot be lost so quickly" (p. 577). [615]

XXII

The Language of the Matacos

One of the mysteries of modern linguistics is the lack of information on this interesting group of languages, spoken by tribes which still occupy a considerable territory in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos.

Little enough was known about the Mocoví, Abipon, and Lule, but that little was enough to reveal the grammatical workings of the respective languages. Yet about Mataco neither Hervas nor Adelung

114 can tell us more than that it existed.

It is hard to understand how the Mataco texts of Jesuit Mission times could have disappeared so completely, a thing lamented over by Machoni more than half a century before the suppression of the order.

I cannot believe that there does not exist, somewhere, a written record of some sort regarding it, and I do not despair of being able to run it down; but for the time being I must limit myself to the works of Father Romedí (of the Seraphic Order), to the notes which were presented to me by the Franciscan College of Tarija and finally and in the place of honor as it were, the field notes of engineer Juan Pelleschi. (1)

> 1. When I wrote this the Vejoz manuscript had not come into my hands.

In the chapters which treat the subject of the history of the Tonocotés it seems to be proved that the Tonocotés, Mataguayos, Matacos, and the Mocovi-type Guaycurú tribes, were groupings of one single race, which spoke different dialects but which had a great deal in common.

197 We know now that the Noctenes, Mataguayos, and Matacos are tribes of the same family and speak dialects which are as similar to each other as are Portuguese and Spanish. These dialects, by their grammatical construction can in no way be confused with the Lule of Machoni, since the former prefix their pronominal particles while the latter suffix them.

114 Hervas and Jolis (2) have disproved Machoni's theory that

> 2. In Italian, as in Latin, "J" sounds like "Y."

[616] the Tonocotés who spoke Lule had taken refuge in the Pilcomayo River basin. Neither at that time nor at the present has any tribe been discovered to correspond to Machoni's Lules in that area, but there do exist there many of the Nocten, Mataco and Mataguayo type whom I suppose to be the real Tonocotés or Toconotés.

193 From the most cursory examination of the Mataco or Mataguayo, or Nocten tongue it is evident that it is a language which prefixes its pronominal particles, while the Lule has just as strong a bent towards suffixing them.

197 This fact alone is sufficient to separate Mataco from Lule with a barrier which is not to be bridged by Father Machoni's brief and [114] indirect reference. This does not mean that I deny that Mataco and Lule may share common words—these analogies will be noted later—but the grammatical mechanism and the pronouns themselves point in absolutely opposite directions.

Following the classification which we have been setting down in this study, Mataco corresponds to the Atlantic type insofar as the position of affixes is concerned, although it is my impression that it leans more closely towards the Moja branch than towards the Guaraní, in spite of the greater immediacy of the latter.

114 Before proceeding further let us examine the arguments on 197 which Machoni rests his hypothesis that the Tonocoté of Techo and others is really Lule:

In the first place the Lule language is not widespread but limited to the five nations: Lule, Isistiné, Toquistiné, Oristiné (1)

1. The Missionaries of whom Hervas made enquiries deny that there be Oristinés.

and Tonocoté. The Tonocotés numbered 60,000 souls. (Machoni's prologue.)

Secondly, the Tonocotés in the XVII century lived near Concepción del Bermejo and were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena and Anasco. These Indians taking offense at the Spaniards, went off to the banks of the Yabebirí and Pilcomayo Rivers. Ibid.

Thirdly the Lules, Isistinés, Toquistines and Oristinés were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena, Monroy and Viana in 1589 and visited by Saint Francisco Solano. Ibid.

In the fourth place the Isistinés, Toquistinés and Oristinés fled to the Chaco and there remained for over a hundred years until in 1710 they came before don Esteban de Urizar y Arespacochaga who placed them in the Valbuena and Miraflores reservations; Father Machoni was with them for 9 years. [617]

114 In the fifth place, Bárcena compiled a grammar and vocabu-
197 lary of the language of these Indians when he evangelized the Tonocotés and Lules. Machoni confesses that nothing remains of this grammar other than the mention of its existence which appears in the missionary's biography. Ibid.

Conclusión: Ergo this Lule tongue is Tonocoté, common to the aforementioned five nations, and used by the Matará nation and many others of the Chaco for the sole reason that they are neighbors of the Tonocotés and Lules and trade with them.

Regarding all this series of non sequiturs Fathers Yolis [sic] and Hervás have given full account. Machoni confesses that nothing remained of Tonocoté other than the unconnected bits of information which he reports, which certainly have no philological interest whatever.

The Lules of Machoni may or may not be those referred to by Father Techo, but with regard to the Tonocotés Machoni has not given the least proof that they are the Lules; and it goes without saying that the language which he called Lule cannot possibly be stretched to include the Tonocotés.

Even as regards the work of the missionaries this identification of Lules and Tonocotés was unfortunate, for in that region of the Pilcomayo live the Noctenes, Matacos, Mataguayos and Tobas, for whom the Lule tongue is hardly the one to be recommended as common currency.

Had Hervás known about the prefixing character of the Mataguayo and Nocten etc. languages, he would have been even harsher in his criticism of the Lules-Tonocotés of Father Machioni [sic].

Being, as he certainly was, a good philologist he would have known that in a hundred years a suffixing language could hardly change over into being a prefixing one. This violent change is not to be found in any of the other Chaco languages. The Toba of today is the same as the Toba of Bárcena's time, and so also are the other languages.

It must be conceded then that the Lule of Machoni was not and
197 could never possibly be the Tonocoté of the early missions.

Since we know that the Mataguayos spoke Tonocoté in the period about which we are writing, and that at the present time Noctenes, Mataguayos, Matacos and many other tribes speak dialects of Mataco,

000 more or less understandable way, the mysteries of the Christian religion and the teachings conducive to them. Their endeavors were often crowned with great success and where the pernicious example of long-standing but bad Christians did not interfere to sterilize the results of conversions, the new Christians did honor to their teachers and to the religion they professed, as was seen in the Guaraní missions.

The savage is an eminently conscientious man and does his duty with the regularity of a machine. It is the civilized man who has taught him to profess one faith and put into practice another. [620]

In spite of all criticism to the contrary it is unquestionable that the Missionary Fathers made their Indians understand the mysteries of our religion as well as many who are not Indians understand them. It is a fact, nevertheless, that for many persons it would be preferable to know the syntax and vocabulary of a new language without the intervention of interpretations which are sometimes forced with the object of introducing a new stream of ideas and concepts.

If this is true of the language, how much more is it so of the customs, habits, etc. of those who speak it. The missionary has only one dilemma: that which is not God's is the Devil's, and the God of the Indians, regardless of how good he may be, is a Devil in his eyes. Apart from all this, to think otherwise would expose them to grave charges from the direction of their superiors, and something worse from the direction of the Church.

We therefore always need the research of a lay person who will describe the Indian and his language to us without any preconceived ideas about either one. We want to hear someone who has studied the Indian in his savagery and who is ready to recognize that the evil of the good Indian may be a better thing than the good of an evil man who may call himself civilized: I am speaking of "good" and "evil" according to our idea of these two qualities.

● 114 This lack has been filled in a very special way by engineer Juan Pelleschi in his well known Otto Mesi nel Gran Ciacco, [Eight Months in the Gran Chaco], but there were missing from that great work the abundant and excellent vocabularies, dialogues and sentences which remained unedited in his travel portfolios. In these there is set down the way of thinking and of speaking of the Mataco Indian when he is "at home" in his forest and in his savage simplicity. Mr. Pelleschi has not wished to correct the Spanish syntax of the informant when the sentence was invented by him in one language and then the other, which gives even greater value to these illustrations of what the Uicquñ tongue is like.

114 Mr. Pelleschi has done what Dr. Leuz is doing in Chile for the Araucanos, and with as much ground for applause.

In the author's published work my secretary and I have had no part other than that of ordering it alphabetically and compiling a Mataco-Spanish lexicon, without which no study of a language can be considered complete.

As the original is in Italian I have had to translate that part of the book which is here reproduced, leaving the checking and correcting to the author. The English understood the importance of the work before [621] we did and it was shameful that the most modern and most complete description of our Indians was written in a foreign language and had not been put into the national tongue. The Geographic Institute, by means of this publication has erased that black mark, and has gone further by adding the vocabularies etc., which are lacking in the original and which give so much greater value to this work.

It is not altogether impossible that the author will make a study, later on, of what is here published in order to perfect his essay on the grammar of the Mataco language. But even if he were not to do this, what has been published is enough to give us a pretty full grasp of what the language of these Indians is and what it is not.

As the translation has been checked by the author himself, those passages which may appear to be incomplete or in which it may be observed that extra material has been inserted, are to be laid at the author's door, as must also all new material with which the work has been supplemented.

104 In the key which precedes the vocabularies the derivation of words and phrases will be designated together with the key letter. As will readily be understood, this is a valuable addition to the vocabularies, for a new word, heard only once and from one person is exposed to error, but when its lexical and phonetic value is attested several times over, little doubt can remain about it. On this score also is Mr. Pelleschi's work highly interesting, it being a step in the direction of a better understanding of the tangled phonology of the Chaco languages of the Guaycurú type, of which Mataco is an important part.

The map was made by Güido Jacobacci, Engineer, in accord with information which we have given him and with the help of the map of Father Jolis and Corrado, and also of Araos'. One can see

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"Note:--The material contained in the foregoing chapters has been taken from the book Otto Mesi ["Eight Months" --Translator] in which it was set down in a hodgepodge manner and in the order in which the author had come upon it in his travels, which is only natural when one is going about with a note pad in one's hand faithfully setting down facts of interest. This order was not convenient in a work such as the present for many reasons, not the least being ease of reference. However little these Indian languages may lend themselves to rules of a sum, es, fui type, it is always best to try to explain them in grammatical terms familiar to us. Everything is conventional anyway in this realm for, except for cases such as the Volapuk, every language was first spoken and then written and only much later reduced to grammar.

The chapter dealing with pronouns was compiled from loose observations found in several chapters. The importance of this "part of speech," if we may use the term, when speaking of the Mataco language, necessitated a separate chapter, however short and unsatisfactory, in view of the fact that it is the most difficult element for every collector of vocabularies. This difficulty was the cause of the author's not having such a chapter in his original essay, a lack which we have here remedied--The Editor."

[Pages 275-350 of the Spanish text consist of a Mataco vocabulary which has not been translated into English and will be found only in category 116 with the rest of the foreign text. --Analyst]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

133 the river Pilcomayo, following its sinuous course, and this is practically the only way known to white people hitherto. An explorer who undertook to penetrate at random into the interior of the unknown country east of the river, without being accompained by Indian guides, would be almost sure to perish from thirst within a few days. Many promising expeditions into the Chaco have ended disastrously in this way. Only the natives know where the few water places are to be found. Generally these consist of small pools, the stinking brown or green water of which seems almost undrinkable to a white man; but the explorer soon finds it good enough even for him and it will save the life both of man and beast.

648 Another danger to the explorer is the hostility of the savage natives who inhabit the country. This aspect of the Chaco tribes has become almost proverbial owing to the fact that several explorers have met a disastrous end at the hands of the savage Indians. In our own days the best known of these unfortunate explorers are Crevaux, Ibareta, and Boggiani, of whom the first mentioned was killed by the Toba Indians on the banks of the Rio Pilcomayo, at the place which still bears his name. Several expeditions have tried to explore the country, following the course of the Pilcomayo down to its confluence with the Rio Paraguay, but the first which succeeded was the Bolivian expediton under D. Campos in 1883. The interior of the Chaco, however, is still to a great extent unknown, and ethnographic exploration of this interesting country did not begin until a few decades ago.

●114 The above description of the Chaco has particular reference to the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco and more especially to the region on both sides of the river Pilcomayo, of which I have acquired personal knowledge. My ethnological studies have in fact been limited to the most important of the tribes inhabiting that region, tribes which, when I first visited them, were very imperfectly known. The Pilcomayo is the largest of the few affluents that the great river Paraguay receives from the west. For the main part of its course the river flows through very little known country, and the tribes that have settled on its banks or roam about on the grassy plains or in the thickets of the interior still live completely — or at any rate did live at the time when I visited them — in a state of nature. The most important of these tribes are the Mataco, the Choroti, the Tobas, and the Ashluslay, who live partly on the right (Argentine), partly on the left (Bolivian) side of the river. The Mataco, the Choroti, and the Ashluslay, who linguistically are closely related to each other, form a group of their own. The Tobas, although a typical Chaco tribe, both

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

linguistically, anthropologically and in their whole character differ essentially from them. Their culture is undoubtedly the most important and the most interesting native culture on the Pilcomayo and in the whole Chaco.

Among the Pilcomayo tribes moreover many travellers reckon the Avas or Chiriguano [1]), who inhabit a large territory between the Upper

A settler's ranch on the Bolivian side of the Pilcomayo.

Rio Pilcomayo and the river Parapiti in the north, a territory forming the western limit of the unknown Chaco boreal. The Avas, who belong to the great Guarani people, form with the Guaranized Chané a special group with many distinguishing features in their culture, and should not therefore be included among the Chaco tribes proper. In 1912 I visited the largest villages inhabited by the Avas and also made some notes

[1]) 'Chiriguano' is a nickname given to these Indians by their enemies, the Quichuas, and has never been recognised by themselves; on the contrary, they regard it as an insult. These Guarani Indians call themselves *Ava* (that is, 'men'), and this is the only name that should be used of them in literature.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

on their customs. These Indians are now half-civilized and Christians in name, and we owe our best knowledge of their culture to the Catholic missionaries who have been active amongst them in former times. In the south the Avas have had contact with some of the Chaco tribes, especially with the Mataco, but without receiving any cultural influence from them.

The principal objects of my researches in the Chaco have been the Choroti and the Tobas as well as those Mataco Indians that have settled on the Bolivian side of the Pilcomayo, a tribe generally known under the name Mataco-Nocténes. Along the middle course of the river, not far from the Bolivian fort Guachalla, I also occasionally came in contact with the Ashluslay Indians, but found no opportunity to study their customs more thoroughly.

Before I proceed to describe the customs of the Indians visited by me, I shall give a short account of my travels in the Chaco.

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Chapter I.

My travels in the Gran Chaco.

In October 1911 I arrived in Buenos Aires by an English steamer, proceeding directly from London, and a few days later continued my journey by railway to my future field of research. The Argentine government, to which I was introduced by the Russian minister in Buenos Aires, Count Maximoff, did everything to facilitate my undertaking and even offered me an escort on my journey to the Indians — an offer which however I was obliged courteously to decline. My nearest goal was the sugar factory of Esperanza, situated about three miles from the small town San Pedro in the province of Jujuy in northern Argentine. At this factory thousands of Indian labourers are employed to cut the sugar cane in the fields surrounding the village. Among these native labourers almost all Chaco tribes are represented — especially the Tobas, the Mataco and the Choroti — and there are instances of Indians arriving from the interior parts of the country where no white man has yet put his foot. Here I had an excellent opportunity of making preliminary acquaintance with the Indian tribes whom I proposed to visit later on in their own land.

I was received with great kindness and hospitality by the owners of the sugar factory, the great English firm Leach Brothers, who helped me to get into contact with the Indians. At Esperanza I stayed for three weeks, making preparations for my expedition into the Chaco, so that it was not until in the middle of November that I could set out upon my journey. From San Pedro de Jujuy it is only a few hours railway journey to Embarcación, which at that time was the last station towards the north. From there on one could only travel on mule-back along the road which from Embarcación goes to southern Bolivia. Messrs. Leach had helped me to buy the mules at Esperanza and also got two peons to accompany me at least on the first part of my expedition.

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114 The way which leads from Embarcación up to Bolivia is what is called a *camino carretero*, a broad road suitable for big carts drawn by mules. It is illustrative of the primitive means of communication in Bolivia that nearly all articles of commerce had to be transported along this road up to such distant places as Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Mojos in the heart of Bolivia — a journey which takes months to accomplish. My own nearest goal was a place called Yacuiba, a big village which at that time belonged to Bolivia, but a few years later on was annexed by Argentine. The journey from Embarcación to Yacuiba takes seven days. Embarcación is situated on the bank of the Rio Bermejo, a tributary of the Pilcomayo, and this river had to be crossed, the mules swimming over it. Having a few hours later passed the small village Miraflores, we arrived at the open plains varied with small forests which here form the westernmost part of the enormous territory of the Gran Chaco. These regions are almost uninhabited; only isolated *tolderias* (villages) of the Mataco Indians are found, from which occasionally we could hear the beating of drums or the incantations of the medicine-men, when they were trying to call forth rain or to drive away evil disease-bringing spirits. The scarcity of water in fact was great, for although it was the beginning of the rainy season very little rain had as yet fallen, and at the halting-places it was generally difficult to find water for the beasts. In a place called Bomba, inhabited by a lonely settler, we had to pay for the drinking-water, which was brought from a distant pool near the cordilleras rising in the west.

114 About midway between Embarcación and Yacuiba lies the village Tartagal, which at that time only consisted of a couple of poor houses. In 133 this region nature entirely changes its aspect. The traveller, having previously marched for days through open plains and thickets, suddenly enters a virgin forest of almost tropical grandeur, where the great variety of climbers and creepers, covering not only the giant trees but also bushes and plants, especially attracts attention. This is a type of scenery which is only met with in the vicinity of the Andes, never in the interior of the Chaco. We had to march a couple of days through this interesting primeval forest before we again came out on the plains. Just north of Tartagal there is the small village Aguaray — like all villages in this region, rather a group of primitive ranches — whence it is only one day's journey to Yacuiba.

Yacuiba was formerly a place of bad repute, being a resort of criminals and adventurers of the kind so frequently met with in places far away from the centres of civilization in Argentine and Bolivia. At the

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114 time of my stay in Yacuiba conditions were much improved, and the village has since made considerable progress, chiefly owing to some foreign commercial houses which have established themselves there. Yacuiba has now several hundred inhabitants, among whom there is a small number of Europeans. The village became my head-quarters for the whole time that I travelled in the Chaco. One of the foreigners, Don Carlos Holzer, did me great service in helping me to get peons and to prepare for my expeditions into different parts of the country.

114 491 There are two roads leading from Yacuiba to the river Pilcomayo; the one, passing through the village of Caiza, takes the traveller to the small place called Crevaux; the other leading directly along the line at the 22nd degree of latitude to the Bolivian fort d'Orbigny. Both these places are situated close to the river, the former a few leagues to the north of the latter. On my first expedition to the Pilcomayo in November 1911 I took the second road, the one leading to d'Orbigny. From Yacuiba this place can be reached in three days, travelling on horseback. In addition to the riding-mules I had three baggage mules and was accompanied by two peons none of whom had been at the Pilcomayo before. These regions are entirely uninhabited; there are neither settlers nor Indian villages. [133] The way goes partly through deep forests, partly through arid deserts and — near the river — through grassy plains. The right (Argentine) bank of the Pilcomayo is extremely flat; it is difficult to imagine more monotonous scenery.

114 At d'Orbigny a small body of ten Bolivian soldiers commanded by a lieutenant was garrisoned and I had counted on their assistance at the crossing of the Pilcomayo, which in the rainy season is very broad and rapid. The fort, however, turned out to be situated on the opposite side of the river and was not even visible from the spot where we were. No human being could be seen on whom it would have been possible to call for assistance. At last we caught sight of two Indians who had swum over the river from the opposite bank evidently for the sake of fishing on the Argentine side where the water is lower. They were Toba Indians who knew enough Spanish to inform us that there was absolutely no canoe to be had either on this or the other side of the river, and that all must cross it by swimming, even the mules. Since the Pilcomayo at this place has a breadth of nearly one mile, it seemed by no means a trifle to cross it with the baggage and the mules. Happily the rainy season had not yet properly begun, so the river was comparatively low. The Indians offered to help us take over the beasts and for this purpose went in search

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of a ford. Those Chaco Indians who live beside the river, clever swimmers as they are, possess great experience and dexterity in performing such tasks and in fact, no white traveller in the Chaco could easily do without their services. At the fordable place where we crossed to the other side the water was so low that men and animals had to swim only a short distance, our clothes being taken over in a big cow's hide folded up so as to form a sort of vessel. Within half an hour we were all safely on the other side of the river and could continue our journey.

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The Bolivian sub-tribes of the great Toba nation inhabit the region between fort d'Orbigny in the south and the village Villa Montes (Mission of San Francisco), situated about twenty leagues to the north, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo. I proposed to visit these Indians later on. For the present my destination was the country of the Choroti which lies about midway between the fort d'Orbigny and the next Bolivian military station on the Pilcomayo, Guachalla. To reach the first Choroti village I had to travel about eight leagues along the narrow path which — in the main following the river but at times retiring far from it — runs from d'Orbigny in a southerly direction. This path is in some places almost obliterated, especially when it leads through the plains, and for the traveller there is the frequent risk of losing it, in which case he may easily go astray in the wilds.

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It was in the beginning of December that I first made the acquaintance of the Choroti in their own land. These Indians are now what the Bolivians call *indios mansos* (tame Indians) and there is no danger for a white man in visiting them. The few white settlers on the Pilcomayo have very seldom had any trouble with the Choroti, who — in contrast to the arrogant Tobas — are a peaceful people. A *kilai* (the name given every white man) is therefore kindly received if he himself treats the Indians well and does not arrive empty-handed. So it was with Nordenskiöld during his stay among the Choroti, and so it was with me. It is not possible to live among the Chaco Indians without bringing articles of exchange, and for my own part I had a good supply of such things. Among these were not only shirts, needles, thread, small mirrors, glass beads etc., but above all tobacco which is the article most appreciated by these Indians. Tobacco in fact is a sort of tribute which everybody must pay who travels in the Chaco and has to deal with the natives. Every male member of the small community whose guest I was had to receive his share — of course only a small quantity, just enough to fill the pipe a couple of times — and the gift had to be repeated every day. The Choroti

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In 1908 another Swedish ethnographer, Erland Nordenskiöld, lived in all for about three months among four or five of the Pilcomayo tribes, and in his popular book *Indianerleben in El Gran Chaco* (1912) has given a general account of the material culture and the daily life of these natives. For detailed and methodical studies of their social customs, religious beliefs, etc., Nordenskiöld had no time and no training, and probably very little interest, since the main object of his travels in the Gran Chaco was to make ethnographic collections for Swedish museums. It is curious that although Nordenskiöld lived on very friendly terms with the Choroti and the Ashluslay and tried in every respect to accommodate himself to their customs, he could find out nothing about their intellectual culture and religion, not even the name of their spirits. Thus for instance Nordenskiöld erroneously describes the dances of the Choroti as being purely profane, overlooking their magical or religious character, which of course gives them their chief interest. As to the Tobas, the most important of the Chaco tribes, Nordenskiöld did not visit them at all.

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The English missionary Rickhard J. Hunt, who visited the Choroti after I had left the Chaco, has chiefly studied their language.

My own task was to complete Nordenskiöld's general account of the material culture of the Chaco tribes with as detailed studies of their customs and intellectual culture as possible. For this purpose I stayed about eight months among the Choroti, after which I settled down among the Tobas, making also occasional visits to some Mataco tribes which were culturally closely related to the Tobas. My studies were rendered particularly difficult by the fact that neither the Choroti nor the Tobas speak Spanish, while interpreters were impossible to obtain. I had to pick up both languages gradually, which of course meant a considerable waste of time since language to me could only be a medium for the study of native culture and was not in itself the object of my studies. It was not until the end of my stay among the Choroti that I met some Indians who could speak a little Spanish. Another thing which, in its way, hampered my studies of the Choroti was the difficulty of getting provisions during the dry season, when the natives themselves are often brought to the very verge of starvation. Since the river was as yet too swollen to allow me to cross it for the purpose of returning to Yacuiba, I myself had similar difficulties until at last I got some provisions from one of the few settlers living on the Pilcomayo.

Owing to these circumstances the material collected by me among the

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114 Choroti and Toba Indians is not so rich as I wished it to be, nor have I been able to realize my plan of returning later to Chaco for the sake of completing it. My next great expedition took me to the Indians of the Amazon territory. However, I think the new facts I have been able to gather relating to their general sociology, their customs and beliefs, magic dances. etc., form an important contribution to our knowledge of the intellectual culture of the Chaco Indians, so strangely neglected by earlier ethnographical travellers. In fact, the dances of the South American Indians have never before been the object of detailed studies. The Chaco culture has in many respects a character of its own, differing markedly, for instance, from the cultures peculiar to the tropical virgin forests in northern South America. Taken as a whole it is much poorer; neither the material nor the intellectual culture in these inhospitable regions has attained the same stage of development as in the regions better endowed by nature. Even the rites and ceremonies in which religious life finds expression among the Chaco Indians are comparatively few.

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361 The Choroti are split up into three minor tribes which are settled in different parts of the territory occupied by these Indians. One of these sub-tribes lives on the left bank of the Pilcomayo just in latitude 22° S. and a few leagues to the north of it. Their chief at the time when I lived among them was Toula. A second sub-tribe lives about ten leagues east of them in the interior of the country. In March 1912 I undertook an expedition to these Indians. who had never before been visited by a European. Two Choroti Indians accompanied me as guides, and without them it would have been impossible to find one's way through this maze of shrublike forest land. broken here and there by small open plains. Whereas the country adjacent to the great water source Pilcomayo is fairly fertile, the soil in the interior is too dry and sandy to be suitable for cultivation. Agriculture is practised by the Choroti of the interior on a still more modest scale than by the river Indians, and since they are poor hunters their life must be extremely hard at those periods of the year when there are no wild fruits. These Choroti, like the rest, live in small communities and their total number does not exceed a few hundreds. Their chief at that time was a comparatively young man called Anempä

The third and largest Choroti tribe is found within a few leagues of Fortín Guachalla, the Bolivian military settlement mentioned before. These Indians only live on the banks of the river during the dry season. when the scarcity of water renders life in the interior impossible. The

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648 least with the Mataco. The Choroti also very much fear the powerful and ferocious Tobas and do not like to pass through their country.

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●114 Having finished my studies of the Choroti Indians, I left at the beginning of April for Yacuiba to prepare for my next Chaco expedition, when I proposed to visit the Tobas. Since I could not cross the river which was still swollen by the rains, I decided to return to Yacuiba through the village of Villa Montes (Mission of San Francisco), situated about thirty leagues to the north of d'Orbigny, on the bank of the Pilcomayo. From this village it is a journey of nearly three days to Yacuiba. A narrow riding-path, which in the main follows the course of the river, takes the traveller up to Villa Montes through the dense forests bordering the banks of the Pilcomayo in this region. The typical Chaco scenery disappears as one approaches the cordilleras. The village itself is situated on the very border of the Chaco, at the point where the Pilcomayo leaves the mountains.

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484 A journey like this is very difficult and even dangerous during the rainy season. In many places the primitive riding-path had been completely destroyed by the strong current of the swollen river. Every now and then large pieces of the river bank were detached and plunged into the water with a tremendous rumble, carrying with them giant trees and bushes. In such places the traveller had to cut a new path through the thickets of the virgin forest for himself and his horse, which of course was often connected with great difficulties. It is easy to understand that in this way the Pilcomayo has undergone considerable changes in the course of time. As is shown by old river-beds, the river has several times even taken another course.

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114 These regions are inhabited mainly by Toba Indians, and on my journey to Villa Montes I passed through some of their villages. Since these Tobas are comparatively easy of access, I decided to stay among them on my second Chaco expedition.

In Yacuiba I was obliged to stay for more than one month, so it was not until the middle of May that I could again leave for the Chaco. Passing through the little village of Caiza to Villa Montes, which became my head-quarters for the next six months, I settled in a Toba village about eight leagues to the south of this place, visiting later on the more distant Toba tribes. Although the Tobas have had a bad reputation — among other things these savages killed the explorer Crevaux — I was received by them in quite a friendly manner. In regard to the language, I had in the beginning the same difficulties as among the Choroti. The two

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The classical work on the Mataco Indians, in fact almost the only work dealing with the culture of these Indians at some length, is the one published by the Italian engineer Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, a monograph forming part of the larger work by the same author *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*. Firenze. 1881. Pelleschi's account of the customs and beliefs of the Mataco, however, is neither systematic nor complete. During my stay among the Mataco-Nocténes I succeeded in collecting a great many new facts especially as regards their religion, and these new facts are published in this book. I may add that — apart from a certain cultural influence exerted upon the Nocténes by their neighbours, the Toba Indians — their customs and beliefs seem to be much the same as those of the other Mataco tribes.[1]

Since the Chaco Indians, at any rate the tribes of the Pilcomayo, have many essential features in common, I shall in this book treat of their cultures in connection with one another, taking care however to point out every time whether the particular custom or idea dealt with has been found among the Tobas, the Mataco, or the Choroti.

The following works have hitherto been published by me on the customs of the Chaco Indians.

La Religion de los Indios Mataco-Nocténes de Bolivia Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires. Tomo XXIV, 1913.

The Couvade or Male Child-bed among the South American Indians (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar.* Bd LVII. Helsingfors, 1915.

Indian Dances in the Gran Chacó (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar.* Bd. LVII. Helsingfors, 1915.

Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der Südamerikanischen Indianer (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis.* Humaniora. Abo, 1920).

The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis.* Humaniora. Abo, 1923).

A great many facts concerning the Chaco Indians are also contained in my work *The Civilization of the South American Indians* (London & New York, 1926).

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[1]) As to the history of the Chaco tribes, see the important work by Ludwig Kersten, *Die Indianerstämme des Gran Chaco bis zum Ausgange des 18 Jahrhunderts. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Ethnographie Südamerikas* (*Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* XVII. Leiden, 1905).

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this they have gradually become more civilized, and in the same degree, of course, their culture has undergone changes and modifications.

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The material culture of uncivilized peoples can, at least in its essential aspects, be studied even by amateurs and travellers who stay among them only for a short time. Since this side of the culture of the Pilcomayo tribes, more particularly of the Choroti and the Ashluslay, has been described by Nordenskiöld, I need not dwell long upon it here. However — as I believe to have adequately shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* — the material culture of a savage people can never be properly studied isolated from its intellectual culture. The extremely superficial view Nordenskiöld takes of Indian culture in general cannot fail to show itself in his treatment of the ergology of the Indians, just as it shows itself for instance in his erroneous view of their dances and games. In the way in which the Indians manufacture and use their weapons and implements, their ornaments, the instruments connected with their religious ceremonies etc., their whole mentality finds expression, and no ethnographer disregarding the psychology of the Indians and their »superstitions» therefore is likely to give a really scientific account even of their material culture [1]). But a real insight into the mentality of an uncivilized people of course makes a prolonged stay among that people necessary.

Since the material culture of a people is always to a great extent dependent on natural conditions, it is easy to understand for instance that in dress and ornaments, in the methods of constructing the houses, in agriculture, industry, and the general mode of life a great homogeneity is to be found between the different Chaco tribes. In a subtropical land like the Chaco, where the weather is often very hot,

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[1]) It is characteristic on this point that Nordenskiöld for instance calls the drums, rattle gourds, whistles, etc. of the Pilcomayo Indians »musical instruments», entirely ignoring the fact that these objects — as also the bull-roarers, which to Nordenskiöld are simply »play-things» — have a purely magic significance. (»The Choroti and the Ashluslay possess a good many musical instruments», etc., *An Ethno-Geographical Analysis of the Material Culture of Two Indian Tribes*, 1919, p. 164). I wish to point out that these tribes do not in fact possess *a single* musical instrument since, as conceived by the Indians, the said objects have absolutely nothing to do with »music» in the sense of the word familiar to us. I should presume that the first thing an ethnographer, dealing with the material culture of a savage people, has to observe is to name their objects by their right names and not to give them names suggested by a certain similarity they may have to objects known to civilized peoples.

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RELIGION.

Chapter XII.

Belief in gods and spirits in general.

I have mentioned before that the religion of the Chaco Indians is a subject strangely neglected by all who have travelled among these natives and studied their customs. Thus, in regard to the Tobas, the naturalist Azara arrived at the conclusion that they have no religion at all, and d'Orbigny rested satisfied with stating that »their religious beliefs are very limited», whereas the Catholic missionary Cardús considered the study of these things useless. Similarly, nothing — apart from the data published by myself — has been related of the religious ideas of the Choroti and Ashluslay. Almost the only author on the Chaco Indians who gives us some information about their religion is Barbrooke Grubb, but he deals exclusively with the ideas and customs of the Lenguas of Paraguay. 114

The main reason for this deficiency of our information respecting one of the most important sides of native culture is obvious. The subject of religion, if one has a real study of it in view, requires special training and a prolonged stay among the natives, and these conditions have been lacking in the case of most »ethnographic» travellers in the Chaco, not to speak of naturalists or ordinary travellers. But even to one who devotes special attention to the spiritual aspect of Indian culture the study of such a subject as religion is beset with great difficulties, and the study can hardly ever become exhaustive. Although this may undoubtedly be said of my own contribution also, I venture to believe that in the following account at any rate the most important religious ideas and customs of the Pilcomayo Indians are mentioned.

The lowest tribes of the Pilcomayo, the Choroti, Mataco, and — as far as I have been able to ascertain — the Ashluslay, have no belief in a supreme god, nor any ideas of a creation. Beliefs of this kind are extremely 776 773

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Chapter XIX.

Ceremonial games.

During my stay among the Choroti my attention was drawn to a curious game which was played in all villages in the month of March and evidently had some mystic meaning. The game later on turned out to be »international» in the Chaco, most tribes knowing it and playing it in somewhat different forms. The Choroti call it *syuke*, the Tobas *eoka*, the Ashluslay *syúkak*, etc., names which are evidently nothing but different corruptions of the Quichua word *chunca*, ten. Similarly the playing terms in the Chaco are as it were international and of Quichua origin, a fact which seems to support the assumption that at any rate the principal ideas underlying the game have been borrowed from the Quichua Indians.

I have only studied this game among the *Choroti* and the description I shall give of it in the following pages refers merely to the variety of the game existing among these Indians.[1])

The dice consist of four pieces of wood, which are on one side convex, on the other side quite flat. The convex side is often ornamented with certain incised figures. (See fig. 10, a.)

The player takes two dice in each hand, throws them up smoothly against each other and allows them to fall on the ground. The position taken by the dice on the ground determines the value of the cast. The points are reckoned in the following way:

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[1]) Nordenskiöld described this game in 1910 in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, but its magical or religious significance — which, of course gives it its particular interest — has entirely escaped him. This may in part be due to the fact that Nordenskiöld never saw the game played at the proper season, the beginning of the »winter», but arranged playing-parties at an other season to learn how it was played. On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that many ceremonies, which are in their character magical or religious, have been misunderstood by ethnologists and regarded as purely profane entertainments.

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hard for existence. Now the game is supposed to have the effect of *increasing the fruit and making the Indians rich*. This is made possible by virtue of the fact that *among the Indians there is always someone who wins*», from whose luck all will benefit. The Indians believe that just as they can influence the course of nature, »hurry on» the growth of the crops, by beating drums, dancing, and shaking rattles, so they believe that at this critical period they can enhance the vegetative power of the useful trees and prevent starving by playing *shuke*. It seems to me probable that in this game the magical effects are produced merely by the procedure of playing — by the feverish pace at which the game goes on, and so forth — just as technique and the very rhythm play an essential part in such magical ceremonies as dancing and the beating of drums.

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That the *shuke* game, so far as its principal features are concerned, has been borrowed by the Choroti from the mountain Indians, as has been suggested even by Nordenskiöld, is a matter beyond doubt and may be inferred from the playing terms themselves which are of Quichua origin (*shuke* = *chunca*, *tauva*, and probably *kima*). On the other hand, it is certain that the Incas never had an exactly similar game, and Nordenskiöld's imagination carries him too far when he tries to show that certain objects, found in archeological excavations on the mountain area of Ecuador, are nothing but counting-boards which have been used for a game more or less identical with the *shuke*. [1]) Nordenskiöld's curious idea of connecting the said mysterious objects with the *shuke* game of the Chaco Indians entirely loses its importance in the face of the fact that, as I have shown elsewhere [2]), the ancient Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians had several »games of chance», none of which bore the slightest resemblance to the Chaco game just mentioned. The map published by the same ethnographer, showing the supposed distribution of »games of chance» in South America, was therefore decidedly prematurely drawn. [3]) The particular character of the Chaco game has obviously, in

[1]) See his article »Spieltische aus Peru und Ecuador», in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Heft 2 u. 3. 1918, p. 169.

[2]) See my *Ceremonial Games of the South American Indians* (*Societas Scientiarum Fennica. Commentationes humanarum litterarum*, Helsingfors, 1930).

[3]) Whereas Nordenskiöld erroneously assigns the neighbourhood of Quito in Ecuador as a region where a game like the *shuke* has been practised, he knows nothing of the games of chance I have myself discovered later in that country: the *huairu* game practised in the southern and eastern mountain regions, the *huairitu* and *singu* in vogue among the forest Indians on the rivers Bobonaza and Pastaza.

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many details, been determined by local conditions, and therefore must differ from the games customary among the ancient mountain Indians. Thus all ceremonial dice games in the Inca empire seem to have been connected with the *cult of the dead*, an idea which is wholly foreign to the Chaco Indians. Further, the Incas probably knew only of *portable* playing-boards, whereas the Chaco Indians always draw the counting-board on the ground. Moreover, the latter Indians use arrows as markers, the place where the player is »drowned», is called »river», and so forth.

The Chaco Indians, in all probability, have only borrowed the leading ideas underlying the game, together with the terminology, from their neighbours in the west, and to a certain extent invented a new game, giving these borrownings an application of their own. When the primitive Indians from the interior of the country came in contact with the comparatively civilized peoples in the west, they learned to know certain games which were said to have the marvellous effect of making the fields fruitful and filling the granaries of the Indians. We may assume that it was precisely this *practical* importance of the game that impressed the mind of the primitive Indians and induced them to invent a game similar to that customary among the Incas and to ascribe to it a similar magical efficacy. But the *shuke* was not the only game which originated in this way under the influence of the Inca civilization. Various other games, both games of chance and games of skill, seem to be in vogue in the Chaco, even among tribes so distant as the Lenguas of Paraguay, but of their possible ceremonial character nothing is known. If we may trust the ethnologists who have hitherto related the customs of the Chaco tribes, the *shuke* game is the only one to which a magical significance is ascribed.

Nor does he know the *taba* game practised by the Quichua Indians all over the Bolivian mountain area. The value of »culture maps» so arbitrarily drawn seems to me most doubtful.

[pp. 206-230 inclusive not processed for the File.]

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Myths and Tales of the Matako Indians

(The Gran Chaco, Argentina)

by

Dr. Alfred Métraux
Ethnologist on the staff of Bernice P. Bishop-Museum (Honolulu, Hawaii)

PREFACE

114 I recorded the myths and tales presented here during an expedition in the Argentinian Chaco in 1933. I went there with the purpose of studying the Toba-Pilagá Indians living on the Pilcomayo, especially those around the marshy region known as Esteros Patiños. My numerous trips to the Chaco often brought me into contact with Matako Indians, who are widely spread in the Argentinian Chaco along the Bermejo and the upper stream of the Pilcomayo. At that time I had no intention of studying the Matako as I expected my investigations among the Toba to absorb all of my time. But many times, owing to the bad communications existing in the Chaco, or more frequently to the indolence of the white settlers, I was delayed at some place near a Matako encampment. To kill time I made some observations of the Matako. I made a special effort to obtain from them tales and myths because very little is known of the folklore of these Indians. The short and casual interviews with these Indians were rather productive and in relatively few days I obtained a variety of myths, tales, and legends. During the recording of this material I had frequent opportunities to ask questions about matters touched upon in the tales. The discussions sometimes provoked fresh questions and led to subjects that

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

I had not planned to investigate. I hoped that the notes I took then would be useful for a more systematic and complete study of the Matako in the future. I should never have thought of publishing these tales and documents had I not good reason to believe that there is little chance for me to return to the Chaco.[1] Even if destiny should take me again to that country, I do not know whether the same material would be available. The disappearance of the old native cultures in South America is rapid, especially among tribes of a low cultural level.

The Matako, more than any other Chaco tribe, have been exposed to the degrading influence of white colonists, but there still remain some villages, especially on the upper Pilcomayo and on the middle course of the Bermejo, where the natives live according to ancient standards. Those who had their villages along the »linea», the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación, were the most miserable wretches that I saw in South America. Generous English missionaries try with very precarious means to rescue the Indians by extending to them the protection of the Mission stations and by helping during the critical period of transition from their native culture toward a new form of life. The mission work among the Matako has proved most successful. The Indians have shown extraordinary aptitude and under the direction of the English missionaries they display remarkable talents in crafts that they ignored completely a few years ago. Their zest for instruction has always been deep and their enthusiasm must sometimes be moderated. The rapidity and ease with which the Matako adapt themselves to our modern civilization remains one of the most puzzling problems that I met with in South America. Seen in their native environment the Matako seem to be the most irreducible tribe of the Chaco. Even their physical aspect carries an impression of

[1] I was unable to check many of the ethnological data given in the notes. To make them scientifically available I have reproduced the information in the very terms of the Indians.

I am aware that the ethnological material I gathered among the Matako is too disconnected and fragmentary to be published by itself. I prefer to present it as I obtained it, as notes to the tales. We know so little about the Matako ethnology that even incomplete as these documents are they may be useful and seem to me worth publishing.

The myths and tales published here were transmitted to me by two informants, Pedro and Martin. Both spoke fairly good Spanish and had lived for many years in contact with white men or mestizoes without breaking their ties with the tribes. Of the two informants Pedro was the more deeply merged in native life. He had his hut near the little village of Las Lomitas, the station of the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación. His hut betrayed the initiative of its owner and his will to accept and adapt himself to new conditions. It was built according to the usual Argentinian pattern and very little in it denoted that the inhabitants were Indians. Despite the transformation of the old grass shack into a wooden hut, however, and the iron household wares, the life of Pedro and his family and his neighbors continued in the old pattern. One compartment of the hut was devoted to a mourning wife who observed complete seclusion. Every evening the small hamlet, from which one could see passing trains, was filled with the hoarse grunts of medicine-men. Near the modernized settlement other Indians of the same stock had built a grass village in the ancient fashion and bows and arrows were stuck into the ground ready for hunting or fishing. Pedro was a very intelligent fellow who realized the advantages of learning Spanish and of buying iron instruments from the stores, but he had not lost the sentiments of an Indian. He felt deeply the injuries inflicted upon him daily by white men. Pedro had an open mind, a great sense of dignity and justice, and a deep desire to improve his condition and that of his family. He was as friendly and kind as most Indians are when they do not assume the attitude of beaten dogs.

Martin was an entirely different personality. He was very

Report on the Ethnography of the Mataco Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco

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[7] The ethnography of the Argentine Gran Chaco is still very little known, and will continue thus, for ever, if we do not make the effort now to study systematically the last tribes of Indians still extant but fast disappearing or being assimilated into the non-Indian population.

Our best sources for the study of the ethnography of the Chaco still are the Jesuit missionaries of the eighteenth century: Dobrizhoffer, Paucke Sanchez Labrador, Lozano and Jolis. Present day authors have studied the more directly accessible aspects of the Indian civilizations and therefore their contributions give us only a very superficial idea of Indian life as it is still lived on the Bermejo or Pilcomayo rivers. Even within the realm of material culture, open as it is to all, we are merely given catalogues of objects instead of the information which we might expect regarding economic life and techniques in the broadest sense of the word. Often the living Indians of the Chaco are treated as though they were archeological sites. It would be preferable to allow modern ethnography to take the place of archeology, rather than the other way about.

We have only a very vague idea as to the religious beliefs of those Indians. Descriptions of dances or speculations regarding animism are poor substitutes for an analysis of their beliefs and practices. As for the sociology of the Chaco, it is almost virgin ground [8] and contemporary studies dealing with it are very much below the standard of those made in the eighteenth century.

In 1939, on the occasion of my last trip to the Argentine Chaco, I had hoped to gather the necessary material on the Matacos. The state of my health kept me from doing so. For this reason I must publish the results of this trip in separate articles. In the present state of our knowledge, every new fact, if it has been precisely observed, becomes important. This consideration, together with the encouragement of my friend Doctor Fernando Márquez Miranda, prompts me to publish certain portions of my field notes. They have no other worth than that of being unpublished to date and of having been set

114 down on the field, from the reports of excellent informants. They have been obtained in San Andres and Yuto, on the Pilcomayo river, and in San Patricio, on the river Bermejo.

Birth and Infancy

842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this is considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

most that can be said is that the mania found a suitable climate for continuation in that atmosphere of disintegration and pessimism. It must be remembered that similar crises have been observed from the very beginning of the missionary era. It may well be, therefore, that suicide was an institutionalized form of protest under the conditions of the earlier culture undertaken for some concrete reason by one individual who could not otherwise effectively punish members of the in-group, and followed by others whose desires were kindled by the first example.

Suicides seem to have occurred with relative frequency among the Kaingang who were gathered on a reservation in the State of Sao Paulo. Since in certain cases they seem to have been caused by analogous situations to those found among the Matako, the following passage by Manizer may be of interest: "Suicides caused by family quarrels are very common. I know of several cases: Cagndiri attempted to hang herself because of some affair with her husband's brother; for that reason she was expelled from home. Vangrikuiix tried to hang herself when her husband planned to abandon her. Naxo's wife hanged herself to death because of an affair with her husband's brother, quite a young man. Old Karege's son killed himself by hanging after a quarrel with his wife who had refused to eat palmito which he had brought back from the forest. There were two other cases of suicide during the two years the Kaingang were under supervision."[1]

The cases of suicide among South American natives listed by Wisse, in his book "Selbstmord und Todesfurcht bei den Naturvolkern" (Zutphen, 1933) are based on vague references in the travel literature of the last century and as a rule are valueless for science.

[1] Les Kaingangs, 23th International Congress of Americanists, New York, 1928, p. 760-761.

/211/

755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked [292] over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war [287] shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. [302] The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6
Tapiete SK13

/1 cont./

000 the Sociedad Cientifica del Paraguay. Having also visited
C the Churupí Indians at the mission near Lake Escalante, about
A 25 kilometers from the mission at Esteros, I continued my
M journey on September 5 as far as Linares, where I found a num-
114 ber of Mataco Indians, who in part lived in a town some seven
M kilometers from Linares and in part had come from the other
[361] side of the Pilcomayo River to Linares.

C /2/ On September 9 I left Linares and on the next day
A arrived in Guachalla, from where I visited the Churupí camp
114 /tolderia/ about seven kilometers away.
A
[361] On September 11 I left Guachalla for the fort of Cururenda,
C where I had the occasion to see the Chorote /Choroti/ Indians,
CI who were living in a camp some three kilometers from
114 Cururenda, as well as some Toba and Mataco, who came
CI from the other side of the Pilcomayo to Cururenda.
[361]

C On September 15 I continued my journey as far as Oruro,
T in the environs of which I visited the Tapieté. My escort,
114 Lieutenant Cabello, who knew these Indians well, took me to
T their two camps, one of which is 15 and the other 32 kilo-
[361] meters from Oruro.

C On September 19 I left Oruro, and passing through
114 Capirendá and Carandayty, in the company of Lieutenant
Díego Corvalan, I arrived in Machareti, where I remained
from September 21-25. Since Machareti is a Chiriguano
town, I had a good chance at this place and at the end of my
journey, to observe this interesting Indian tribe.

Beginning my return on September 25, I passed in succes-
sion through Capirendá, Carandayty, López de Filippis, and
C Puerto Casado, arriving in Asunción on October 8.
[122] Thanks to the great help of the military authorities, it was
possible for me to pass through large areas of the Paraguayan
Chaco during the relatively short time of two months, to get
acquainted with a large number of native tribes of the Chaco,
to take photographs of these tribes, and to make up vocabularies
000 of their different languages. Outside of the Toba, whom I met

How could I possibly lend a deaf ear to such expert advice? Even though I might not be equipped to contribute more than an insignificant pebble to the linguistic pyramid, I yet felt stimulated by his words, and to a certain extent committed. Later, while I cudgeled my brain in an effort to untangle and isolate some rule from that mass of words which I had been able to collect, I would every now and then be successful and the resultant feeling of delight in accomplishment would be augmented by the anticipation of the further delight which would be mine when I returned to Buenos Aires and presented my findings to Gutiérrez and talked at length with him.

He was a man of great natural talent which had been magnified by deep erudition. Love of the arts and sciences was uppermost in his life. His tolerance was proportional to his vast knowledge and his free way of thinking. He was affable in manner, which was fitting to one who owed everything to his own efforts and who had experienced all of life's vicisitudes. At seventy and in his lofty literary and administrative position he knew how to inspire, even if with just a word, the most modest student, and to listen to and discuss with the most cordial deference the problems of the least of those who visited him, which is not such a common thing among men of his age and knowledge.

But the pleasure of speaking to him again was to be denied me. On my return the news which caught my attention in the first newspaper which I bought after landing was that of his death, which had occurred on the eve of my arrival!

May your memory, oh Gutiérrez, remain ever as alive and lasting in the hearts of your countrymen as it is in the heart of the author of these lines, who will preserve it in all its freshness! Be pleased to accept as dedicated to you, and protect with your name, the few paltry lines which I may write in the following pages on the subject of the Indian languages -- for it is to you that I owe them, and without you as patron I would not have dared to publish them!

II

Beginnings of the work. Particulars of a personal nature.

At the beginning of my labors I had but little hope of crowning my efforts with any success. We had on board with us an Indian

115 ●
who claimed to be a Mataco, [233] and whom I immediately 124
pressed into service by asking him the names of the different garments we were wearing and the objects which surrounded us. But the man would soon tire after I had asked him just a few words. It was evident that intellectual exertions, be they ever so light, were not for him. Whenever I would ask him the same word twice he would give me to understand that he had already told me and, picking up my notebook, would turn the few written pages it contained and find the right one and point out the general area in which the word alluded to was to be found. And yet I could have sworn that he was looking in some other direction while I was writing! When it is mentioned amongst us that someone is "acting the part of an Indian" -- in the sense that he is pretending to be unaware of what is going on -- a very great truth is affirmed.

With all this I was able to advance little or nothing in my 124
work.

But when a few days later we were harangued by the Toba chief, who seemed to be barking rather than talking, then I became absolutely convinced that I must keep to my own field of knowledge and not wander innocently into others, so useless did it seem to me even to attempt to make any sense out of those barks.

Man, however, proposes and circumstance disposes. A few days later we ran aground, and as we were unable to continue on our way I had ample spare time at my disposal to make use of as I saw fit. The Indians milled about on the land beside the ship. Many chiefs came to see us and we could not understand a word of what they said to us...here then was my opportunity, and I made ready to take full advantage of it.

The Indian is distrustful by nature and does not want out- 115
siders to learn his language, but among them was one Faustino, 124
a Christian [Text unclear as to whether this man was a "Christian Indian" who had given up his religion and returned to his own people, or a "Christian white" who had taken up with the Indians -- Translator.] who had gone over to them, and I, by stealth and without the Indians' knowing it, began to question him. However, I did not find this at all satisfactory, finding so much apparent

confusion in the words when they were strung into sentences and attributing the difficulty to Faustino's little understanding of the matter in hand. At last we were able to establish more friendly relations with the Indians by dint of our frank and open treatment, my continual and almost reverential repetition of their words as though they were precious things whenever an opportunity offered and, finally by the judicious distribution of a few gifts all of which, in combination, made them lose their wariness, especially in the case of the younger ones who then outdid themselves in telling me, of their own volition, the name of every object I cared to ask about. 115 124

But it was really strange: a word, when repeated, would change and be different for no apparent reason. At times its vowel sounds would seem separate, at others dipthonged, to the extent that if one of the two component sounds were stressed more than the other, neither one would agree. Often the change was in the syllable itself, so to speak, while on occasion there would be either a gain or a loss of a syllable. [Original version garbled--Translator] 124 [115]

One morning we made a test with Natalio Roldán. We spent a quarter of an hour establishing between us which was the true [234] sound which was to be reproduced with Spanish signs, and whether it was this sound or some other which had come through in a given word. This vagueness and lack of certainty confirmed Roldán in his opinion that the Mataco language was an enigma which could not be transcribed, was devoid of rules, and could not be learned, as the Missionary Fathers (who were established in Christian territory near the frontier) themselves had affirmed.

My ear, however, becoming accustomed to these new sounds, brought me slowly to the realization that the Mataco tongue was not after all that wild, untamable mustang which people would have one believe. This I realized while only as yet being able to isolate the sounds, for I could not at that time comprehend the reasons behind certain syllabic changes.

I decided to take a new tack and avoid all pretentious arguments on the subject, channelling my efforts into accumulating sentences, examining and comparing them later in order to be

I am aware that the ethnological material I gathered among the Matako is too disconnected and fragmentary to be published by itself. I prefer to present it as I obtained it, as notes to the tales. We know so little about the Matako ethnology that even incomplete as these documents are they may be useful and seem to me worth publishing. 114

The myths and tales published here were transmitted to me by two informants, Pedro and Martin. Both spoke fairly good Spanish and had lived for many years in contact with white men or mestizoes without breaking their ties with the tribes. Of the two informants Pedro was the more deeply merged in native life. He had his hut near the little village of Las Lomitas, the station of the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación. His hut betrayed the initiative of its owner and his will to accept and adapt himself to new conditions. It was built according to the usual Argentinian pattern and very little in it denoted that the inhabitants were Indians. Despite the trarsformation of the old grass shack into a wooden hut, however, and the iron household wares, the life of Pedro and his family and his neighbors continued in the old pattern. One compartment of the hut was devoted to a mourning wife who observed complete seclusion. Every evening the small hamlet, from which one could see passing trains, was filled with the hoarse grunts of medicine-men. Near the modernized settlement other Indians of the same stock had built a grass village in the ancient fashion and bows and arrows were stuck into the ground ready for hunting or fishing. Pedro was a very intelligent fellow who realized the advantages of learning Spanish and of buying iron instruments from the stores, but he had not lost the sentiments of an Indian. He felt deeply the injuries inflicted upon him daily by white men. Pedro had an open mind, a great sense of dignity and justice, and a deep desire to improve his condition and that of his family. He was as friendly and kind as most Indians are when they do not assume the attitude of beaten dogs. 115

Martin was an entirely different personality. He was very

old—the oldest Indian in the mission I believe. Esteemed by everyone, he had developed a consciousness of his respectability that was sometimes a bit comic. He spoke with poise, choosing elegant and sophisticated words the meanings of which he never really understood. His language was a slight parody on the affected speech of certain colonists. In his youth he had lived with his tribe which was still independent of and untouched by European civilization, but later in life, like many intelligent Indians, he deemed it useful and convenient to join the white settlers for a while. He was among the first natives to help the missionaries and became one of the first and best Christians of the Missions. Martin's long contact with mestizo settlers and later with missionaries made of him an informant of lesser value than Pedro. His tales were generally twisted so that they would fit to the new type of living which had developed in Martin's community. In working with me he tried to rationalize the old lore of his tribe as if I were a colonist with no experience in Indian ways. However, his contribution is valuable because he was an old man extremely well informed in primitive customs of his tribe.

Martin's tales are not all Indian, although I expressed to him several times my desire to have only native lore. He told me many tales of distinctly European origin. He always insisted that they were known by other Indians and consequently were genuine. As some of these European tales had been told my be Pedro who also denied their foreign source, one may consider them as having been incorporated into the modern folklore of the Indians. Often Indian elements as well as Indian characters in such tales (for instance, the Rainbow playing the part of an Ogre) point out that European motifs have been worked up by the native story tellers and readjusted to the environment. For that reason I feel that tales of recent introduction should not be neglected. They may give precious hints as to the diffusion of European stories among the natives of America, and indicate the way they have been integrated into native culture. The intro-

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 S17 Mataco S17

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estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

762 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the [797] English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins [115] Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the [824] fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of 262 suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in 251 the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and 252 before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, 762 foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes 164 jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

1: Pelleschi i C-5 (ca. 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7

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The Mataco Indians And Their Language

[Los Indios Matacos y Su Lengua]

By

Juan Pelleschi

Buenos Aires: 1896

Instituto Geográfico Argentino

Translated from the Spanish by Sidney Muirden

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Los Indios Matacos y su Lengua
[The Mataco Indians and their Language]

by
Juan Pelleschi (Engineer)
with an introduction by
Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo, M. A.

Part I

Preliminary Introduction

[14]

Before Mr. Juan Pelleschi published his interesting and painstaking book "Ocho Meses en el Gran Chaco" [Eight Months in the Gran Chaco] the language of the Matacos was practically unknown, although it was common knowledge that many tribes spoke it. It is hard to understand how this language could have disappeared so completely without leaving so much as a trace in the archives of the Jesuit Fathers; but the fact is that even at the beginning of the past century Father Machoni himself complained about the loss of grammars and vocabularies of the Tonocoté language, with which language I identify the Mataco-Mataguayo tongue [797] and which was the language used by the Jesuit missionaries to indoctrinate and evangelize these Indians.

In the early part of this century Hervás and Adelung, the former with his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" [Catalogue of Languages] the latter with his "Mithridates," were able to mention only the name of the language, as though to have on record that they were aware of its existence, but they lamented that they had been unable to secure a single fact in regard to it, not even a Pater Noster with which to illustrate their extremely sparse knowledge of this interesting group of languages spoken by countless Indians, (that is to say by Chaco Indians). The fact is that some time later the scholarly French traveler Alcides d'Orbigny, took

[128]

Translator's Note: The Spanish word "cristiano" when used as a noun which literally means "Christian" has been translated throughout as "white man" or "white," since the translator feels that this is really closer to its basic meaning. "Non-Indian" might have been used instead but it seemed cumbersome and did not carry with it the tone of superiority which both "cristiano" in Spanish and "white" in English (however unfortunately) carry.

114 back to France a short but useful vocabulary of Vejoz, a dialect of the Matacos living near the river Zeta or Oran, but this [560] document remained in obscurity among that author's papers in the National Library of Paris until it was found by Mr. Luciano Adam, who was kind enough to send it to me at Pilciao.

114 126 Without knowing anything about the language of the Mataco Indians, completely free from prejudice regarding both the Indians and their language, and intent upon finding out what he could at first hand, Mr. Pelleschi traveled into the Chaco in the manner which he so picturesquelly describes, capping his work with a linguistic treatise in which he re-discovered (may I be allowed the expression) the language of the Uicquii, whom we call Matacos and Mataguayos. The author cuts himself free from all preconceived notions as to grammatical rules of the "sum, es, fuit," type and writes down what he hears, not once, but a thousand times, until he discovers the part of speech to which, according to our way of thinking, the word he was treating corresponded, together with its other accidental characteristics. In the very same order in which he came upon them he sets them down in his travel notebook, in such a way that Mr. Pelleschi allows us to take part in his discoveries and we can delight with him in each new find.

000 Unfortunately for us the book was written in Italian. Doctor José Gutiérrez, friend of the author and warmly interested in these matters, had died, and there was therefore lacking one who would take an active interest in the book, which was, nevertheless, a revelation regarding the study of Argentine languages. Thus it was that the book remained of interest only to bibliophiles, among whom was General Mitre, and it is to him that I owe my first introduction to this meritorious and extremely interesting work.

After reading the book I resolved to make the author's acquaintance, since it dawned on me, in half an hour's perusal, that information of this type is not set down without copious notes, and I realized that there was an important drawback to the work, which was the lack of a vocabulary which might serve as background and complement to the Grammatical Essay covering the last few chapters.

It was not hard to find a mutual friend, and in 1889 there began a relationship which has yielded me many hours of real pleasure and satisfaction.

000 It is hardly necessary to say that as soon as the first polite conventional exchanges were over with, we plunged into the matter of our common interest, and that Mr. Pelleschi allowed me to see his portfolios, which I emptied of three quarters of their contents before retiring to my house at Pilciao in Andalgalá de Catamarca [561]. Ensconced there with my assistant and secretary Ramón Martínez, we set to work coordinating and ordering the vocabulary and sentence lists with an eye to publishing the result at some future date, always provided that the owner of the notes would permit such a thing.

Mr. Pelleschi and I used to see each other every so often, and when we were far apart, we would write. I used to urge him to publish something further, and he would promise to do so whenever his many occupations should give him respite. Later on we became involved in the politico-commercial occurrences of the years 1889 to 1893, and could only return to the matter at hand at long intervals. Finally, in April of the latter year, in odd moments, and amid other matters which concerned everything but linguistics, I was able to finish the outline of the work which is here published, with the introduction approximately as it now stands, but with Pelleschi's section lacking that fourth part which I had not yet copied.

All the manuscripts were sent to my friend Mr. Pelleschi and he pointed out the flaws contained in what I sent him.

The crisis of 1890 and the subsequent disturbances at the La Plata Museum had postponed publication of my papers on linguistics in the magazine put out by that institution and therefore all my material was held up, among which was our Mataco manuscript. Pelleschi also was busy with other prior commitments, railroad work, etc. In 1893 Mr. J.B. Ambrosetti, on behalf of the Boletín del Instituto Geográfico [Bulletin of the Geographic Institute], offered us space in that worthy magazine, and the work on material gathered on the subject of Argentine Languages went ahead. The schedule was to be as follows: The Lule Tonocoté [language] by Machoni, the Vilela [language] according to Pelleschi and others; and the Mataco Mataguayo group, the first part of which was to be Pelleschi's work.

When it came to Pelleschi's turn, he asked for more time, and so the manuscript remained in the files.

114 By pure chance it happened that in the interim three very important documents were brought to my attention, having to do with the Argentine Mataco as well as the Bolivian Mataco, and there was nothing for it but to use them to fill the gap left us by Pelleschi's missing work.

114 The first of those documents was the result of correspondence with the Fathers of the Franciscan convent of Tarija, and it was published in this same [562] Bulletin of the Geographic Institute under the name of "Nocten," by Father Inocencio Massei; the second document was the above mentioned one of d'Orbigny, and the third the Mataco of Father Remedi of the Salta Convent. All these works hark back to the notes made by the Missionary Fathers of the Seraphic Order, and are of great value because they stem from an extended stay among the Indians, and although the Indians are more or less reserved in matters of abusiones (1) as they call them, they are more apt to speak openly

1. Superstitions

to those wearing the habit of Saint Francis than to any other christian.

000 These monographs, as they were published, were sent to Mr. Pelleschi, partly because of the warm friendship we had for each other and partly because they might be of service, as the memories of La Madrid has been in the case of Paz's writings (2), in precipitating his

2. According to the version told me by Doctor Andrés Lamas.

work on the same subject. Let my friend say what he will, he must needs confess that these treatises inspired him, particularly when he compared them to his own notes, and found how well his observations agreed with them. The outcome was that we agreed to meet in the present year, 1896, in which he was returning from Europe and I was going down to Buenos Aires from my home in the Valle de Londres. Once having got together in this city we applied ourselves to the matter of our common interest for some eight or ten hours per week during a period of four months, until we were able to turn in the manuscript for publication.

Pelleschi had good reason not to wish to tackle the problem of his field notes alone—not that he was not capable of doing so if he set himself to it, but because it is a difficult matter to copy words such as these and distribute them properly without some intelligent help in the matter, for it all becomes confusion and doubt for one who does not have some sound principle to guide him.

126 One by one the words have been checked, the missing twenty five percent has been augmented, the Indians from whom different words and phrases were gathered have been designated with a distinguishing initial, and the unorganized notes on the Otto Mesi [Eight Months] have been translated somewhat more artfully, though under the author's guidance. This was really necessary for matters of reference.

I can say that both he and I have worked with real joy, and now that we are parting after finishing the work, it seems to me that I experience again the feeling which overcame me when I said goodbye to my University companions in the happy years which [563] I spent at Cambridge. I cannot dedicate this work to Pelleschi, nor he to me; but I am sure that he will not be opposed to our dedicating it to the unfortunate Larsen, pioneer in these matters, and the first to make Pelleschi's work known in this country.

Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo.

Buenos Aires, November 3, 1896

Historical References

I

127 If we were to affirm that the Matacos or Mataguayos are first mentioned in the writings of the Missionary Fathers, we would expose ourselves to correction when, at some future date, the archives of our motherland be better known. However, lacking such facts, and without having the work of Father Salinas at hand, I must necessarily begin by setting down what Father Techo says in his Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay [History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay].

175 Refer to volume I, chapters 40 to 43 etc., which include the years 1590, 1591 and 1592.

In the first of these years Fathers Pedro Añasco and Juan Fonte arrived at Tucuman, at the same time that the famous and apostolic Father Alonso Bárcena was evangelizing the Lules, those on the slopes of (Mount) Aconguija, not those under Father Machoni's care. Father Bárcena, full of good works, toiled without ceasing among those belligerent Indians, underfed and in imminent danger of losing his life, but undismayed for all that, so much so that when called to order by his superior he answered with these noble and heart felt words [Latin parallel text omitted. See foreign text--Translator]: "I shall go to you as soon as possible, Father, and at your feet I shall say: Here I am; send me, be it that you return me to the Lules, or to the Calchaquies, to the Chaquenses or the Frontones, or to the uttermost ends of the earth, for I desire with an insatiable longing to be sent where I may suffer all things in behalf of those souls who are to be saved."

It is quite apparent here that the good Father differentiated be-
[114] tween Lules, Calchaquies, Chaquenses and Frentones. In my opinion the Chaquenses were the Mataraes, Matacos or Mataguayos who spoke the Tonocoté language. [564]

II

The Matará People

In chapter 41 Father Techo goes on to tell how the Spaniards founded the city of Concepción del Bermejo, 30 leagues from the point

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175 at which the Bermejo river flows into the Paraguay, with the object of converting the numberless tribes which surrounded it. It was estimated that a hundred thousand Indians lived in the environs and Fathers Fonte and Angulo were their teachers. Almost all of the groups of Indians were Frontones, [Frente = Forehead--Translator], a name which was given to them because of their habit of shaving off the hair on the forward part of their heads.

These Indians hung clubs and handsful of arrows at their belts, and carried a staff or rod to which were attached many fish jaws, which looked like saws. They would go about naked, their bodies covered with paint to inspire terror. They were very jealous of their borders, and by way of warning they would hang the bodies of the enemies they had killed on trees. They were nomadic, and carried their camps from one place to another. [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator].

"Practically every group has a different tongue, and to such a degree does this variety reach that one can say that some eight languages are spoken on either side of the Bermejo river. And the greatest impediment in teaching these people is this variety of languages."

Many of these Indians must have belonged to those whom we call Matacos, yet not necessarily Frentones, since Techo says:- "Pooro gentem ferme hanc omnem ideo Frontones Hipani vocabant," which is the same as saying almost, but not all, were Frentones. That some must have been Matacos can be deduced from the end of Chapter 41: [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator] "But Barcena and Añasco, after leaving the territory of Tucuman, had reached the city of Concepcion, intending to establish themselves among the Matarães; and from there, as circumstances might permit, to go to the Frentones and try to win them over."

It is quite clear from this that the documents which Father Techo referred to made a clear distinction between Matarães and Frentones, since the former were Matacos and the latter Guaycurães, i.e., Tobas, Mocovíes, Abipones, etc. [565]

III

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797 Description of the Matarães - Chapter 42. Year 1591.

For many reasons it is here advisable to reproduce the Latin text [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator]: "The

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175 Matará nation, compared to the other neighboring tribes, is very
797 docile. They used to live scattered about in small groups, as is the custom of the Barbarians, until Alonso Vera, founder and Adelantado of Concepción, made them live together in a town, and had most of them baptized. Evil having become rampant however, it happened that they were unfortunate enough to have as their first Ministers of the Sacrament priests who were absolutely worthless, to the point that they were completely ignorant of even the most elemental mysteries regarding Christian matters. After receiving baptism, not one of the neophytes had ever practiced holy confession. Among almost seven thousand inhabitants many were unbaptized, some being children and some adults. The facilities of the place however were in no way pleasant, humanly speaking—drinking water, muddy and stagnant, was collected when it rained in holes dug in the earth by hand. Corn and a type of pumpkin was their sole food. But that awfulness, both of men and of the place, the great suffering, and the attempting of difficult things for Christ, far from discouraging the members of the Company who took on the task, served only to gladden them. And they, distributing the tasks among themselves and using the Tonocoté language, brought about in a short time, that no one among that whole populace live in concubinage, having anything to do with the superstitions of their forebears or dare, on Sundays or other holy days to be absent from the sermon or from doctrinal classes. Most of them, by dint of frequent confession, were free from all guilt and penalty, disciplined themselves rigorously each week and with the utmost reverence toward the Body of Christ, communed. All were under the guidance of teachers who taught them both publicly and privately those religious exercises practiced by christians of long standing, for the edification
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C of the people." [566]

175 The mild Matáres put up with a great deal. And while the good
797 Fathers were evangelizing these docile catechumens, they were doubling their efforts in another direction, as Father Techo recounts in chapter 43 [Latin parallel text omitted--Translator]: "But that work was as nothing compared to the other undertaken by the Fathers when they exerted themselves in the learning of the several languages spoken by the Frentones. The Frentones being actually the reason for their coming, they must needs learn the language they used in order to be of any help to them. Thus it was that, in the course of a year and

M C 175 797 a half, Alonso Bárcena, an old man 65 years of age, on fire with zeal to win souls for Christ, sharing his studies with Pedro Agnasco, learned the Guarany, Natica, Quisoquina, Abipona, and Quiranguica languages, and put together vocabularies, grammars, doctrinal teachings and sermons, each for its respective use. Both of these men, before leaving Tucuman, had mastered and worked out a grammar and lexion of the Tonocoté, Kakana, Paquina and Quirandica languages, so that the Fathers who might be about to enter districts where these languages were spoken would have the way made easier. And in order that their usefulness be more widely disseminated Pedro Agnasco transcribed most of them many times, particularly the work which Alonso M Bárcena had done, in a very neat hand, and, thus copied out, he gave C them out for general use."

114 We have here a series of very interesting facts, for not only do we learn to distinguish between one tongue and another, but we discover also the origin of that valuable Toba MS, which is at present in General Mitre's library, attributed to Father Bárcena, and which actually is very neatly written, and was not in the least bit troublesome when a transcription of it had to be made for the series on Argentine Languages. The two famous notebooks, although hardly full enough to learn Toba from, are invaluable, because they allow us to see the Toba spoken in 1592.

The chapter referred to ends with a well deserved eulogy of Fathers Bárcena and Agnasco. How many evil things can be accounted to the expulsion of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus! To that event we owe the many gaps in the chain of American languages [567]. The confusion and loss of documents was widespread, calamitous and even down to the present day we are lacking those grammars of the Kaka and Tonocoté languages which are of so much interest to history, ethnology and linguistics.

IV

M T 175 797 The Mission to the Frentones, time lost and other Matará matters.

Devoratis tot linguarum difficultatibus, says Father Techo in chapter 44. The missionaries began their efforts toward the Frentones via

M T 175 797 the Mogosnas and Naticas. "Verum (nevertheless), Deum immortalem, quo successu?" The Mogosnas had killed Francisco Vera de Aragon, the Frentones were in a state of great turmoil, and the Fathers had no other recourse but to return to their base mission among the Matarães. On that occasion no good was harvested from so much effort expended on learning the languages of the Frentones; but linguistics as a whole did gain something, and once again the Fathers of the Company gave evidence that for them martyrdom was glory.

In 1596 Gaspar Monroy and Juan Viana visited the Tonocotés and traversed the territory previously evangelized by Father Bárcena. (Techo, "Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay," L. II, cap. 8). [Techo, History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, Vol. II, Chap. 8].

In 1608 Father Diego Torres essayed to traverse these districts, and regarding this journey Father Techo recounts the following in Book III, Chapter 28 [Parallel Latin text omitted--Translator]. "The state of the Frentones was a sad one, for they wished nothing other than to continue in their perverse customs, dominated by the enemy of the human race. And on seeing them spread out in their forays to the very frontiers of Perú, and on becoming aware that the Abipones, Matacos, Naticas, Mogosnas, and Tonocotés, nations related to the Frentones, were bound in the same captivity because of lack of priests, he felt himself constrained, following the example of Saint Xavier, to return to Europe and, in the Universities of Spain and Italy, to try by dint of exhortation to awaken among the students a feeling of compassion toward such peoples." [568]

M T 114 This quote is an important one, for even if we cannot be sure that Father Techo used the [Latin] term "agnatas" in its true and restricted meaning—relatives on the father's side—he has nevertheless given us a piece of ethnic-linguistic information of great importance and which he doubtless had from some well-informed person. If the Tonocotes, Mataguas and Mataguayos are our present day Matacos it is clear that they must have had ethnic and linguistic affinities with the other nations of the Guaicurú type, as will later on be demonstrated.

The peaceableness of the Matarães contrasted with the extreme fierceness of the Frentones is remarkable. This difference must be attributed to atavism, and from it we shall be able to derive something of interest, as will be seen later.

SI7 Mataco SI7
Choco Indians SK4

V

What Father Techo Says

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It is here necessary to transcribe fully chapter 15 of Book VIII, and year 1628, (1) at which time Don Felipe de Albornoz was governor

1. Techo

of Tucumán, whose term of office is famous because it was then that the great uprising took place which resulted in the destruction of the city of Londres and its re-founding in the Valley of Poman (1633). [Latin parallel text omitted--Translator].

"The year 1628 was of note because of the Apostolic Mission which was to go out from Tucumán to the Chaco Indians. The Province of the Chaco holds within its borders an immense territory almost circular in shape, comprising the diocese of Paraguay, Tucumán, Río de la Plata, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and also the archidiocese of Charcas. This Province is watered by rivers which have their birth in the mountains of Perú, and which after running their lengthy course empty into large lakes or into the rivers Paraguay or de la Plata. At the first appearance of the Spaniards many of the inhabitants of Tucumán and Perú migrated to that place, out of fear of the new regime, an affirmation which is bolstered by the fact that even today one can find there people whose language is Aymará, the vulgar (2) language of the

2. Common

Peruvians. The [569] better known nations are: The Taimvias, who used to occupy 188 towns, the Teutas, Mataguayos, Agoyas, Tobas, Yapitalagas, Mocovíes, Churumatas, Tonocotés, Abipones and several groupings of Indians who are different in language but not much in customs. Among these Indian nations there is not one which lords it over the other, rather, as is the custom among the Barbarians, are they organized in family groups and villages, and subject to their chiefs. The individuals who belong to that people, each in accord with the reigning superstition, choose out of several types of fish one as the patron and protector of their lives, which they worship so punctiliously

M C 175 that they would rather die of starvation than eat a morsel of a fish of that kind. They live in a state of perpetual war, both among themselves and with the neighboring nations, which seem terrible to the outsider more on account of their cruelty than of their scope." This is an invaluable statement for both the ethnologist and the filologist. The mention made of the Aymará tongue confirms what I have suspected regarding the linguistic contact between the Aymaras and the Chaquenses of the Mocoví type. It is a pity that the careful Father does not say who those Indians were who spoke Aymará.

Lozano recounts in Book IV, Chapter 1, the following: that about the year 1532 there was a great drouth in Tucumán. The doleful natives consulted their witchdoctors. These latter painted a grim picture of what was to come, and many, giving credence to these prophecies, went off "towards the Province of the Chaco, where their miserable descendants eke out an existence etc."

It is clear then that the tradition regarding those large migrations to the Chaco is one of long standing and acceptance; but that does not mean necessarily that all the Indians which are to be found there C M 114 175 are the progeny of a single invasion. Above all else we must bear in mind what Garcilazo de la Vega says in his Historia [History].

It appears that the Taimvias must have been the Lenguas, Payagúes etc. who wore the button or "tembetá." This word probably derives from the Guaraní "tembé'—the lower lip—which is the one disfigured with these ornaments or lip plugs. Just as the term Orejones ["oreja" means "ear"--Translator] is applied to all those who use a disc or circular piece in that part of their anatomy, and Frentones are those who shave off the hair on the fore part of their heads, so also was the name Lenguas given to those who use lip plugs.

The Mosovias are the Moscovies, since "cc" [570] (strong guttral) becomes "s" by a process of degeneration; and that is why we find Father Tavolini spelling it Moscovitas.

Here again Mataguayo and Tonocoté tribes are brought together with others of the Toba-Mocoví type, with the warning, "diversitate linguarum quam moribus dissimiliores." This is a fact, as will be seen later; but I can say now, by way of anticipation, that it proves for us that the Mataco language is the result of linguistic hybridization in which the lexicon stems from one lineage and the grammatical usage from another.

VI

C M 175 Father Techo adds immediately that the Governor of Paraguay had attempted to force his way to Perú through the Chaco but had had to abandon the attempt because of Indian resistance. In the year that this event took place (1628) the Governor of Tucumán managed to get a foothold in this region and in his wake came the Fathers of the Company [of Jesus], on a mission to both Indians and Spaniards. The author continues [Latin parallel text omitted--Translator]: "A good many chiefs of different Indian grouping met with him there, and he came to an agreement with them regarding the sites on which were to be founded three towns, similar to those of Paraná. The estimated number of those whose language he knew was 50,000. Those who spoke the Mataguayo tongue were said to number 30,000. Neither did he neglect the language of the Tobas, Mocovíes and Zapitalagas, extraordinarily numerous nations, partly because many of these people clamored to be admitted to the Christian faith and partly because it was hoped that their territory might provide a springboard to further the advance into the provinces which lay beyond, which were even more extensive. He also tried to learn the Churumata language, which bears that name probably because the sound "chuchu" occurs so frequently in it. When Martín Ledesma, the Governor, continued on his march to found another city on the banks of the Solota (1) river,

1. Socotonis or Esteco (?).

our Osorio remained [571] among the Tobas for the purpose of fixing upon the site for a new town in which to bring together and convert the Barbarians, and from that place, writing to the Provincial, he said that there was need for the founding of three towns in the territory of the Tobas, Mocovíes, and Zapitalagas, if enough Fathers could be found for the purpose. He added that the Indians of the interior were so tall that he could hardly reach their heads with his raised hand."

One can see from this how numerous the Indians of the Mataguayo nation were, and also that the Tobas were always near them, a phenomenon which continues to be true to this day.

SI7 Mataco SI7
Choco Indians SK4
Tonocote SI13

VII

T 175 We take a jump forward now to the year 1641 and Book XIII, chapters 4 and 5 of Techo's work. There we see that Father Juan Pastor, Rector of the Colegio de Esteco [Esteco School], with another priest, penetrated the Matará country to a distance of 80 leagues from Esteco. Following which we are told that these Indians were much addicted to drunkenness: they were in the habit of holding "circular" orgies, each taking turn in inviting the others.

These were the two-day drinking bouts—there were others which lasted longer and were called "honors," and were held in honor of their ancestors toward the end of the year, the object of which was to drink as much as possible. The guests presented themselves in line and offered the host of the party an ostrich which a beautiful girl carried on her head. And if the obsequies were in honor of more than one dead person, the ostriches were equal in number to the number of the deceased.

The host was obliged to give a small present to the owner of each ostrich, with the prior condition that the latter would repay in kind—and from the breaking of this pact grew the bloodiest fights. The obligation affected not only those present but also their children and grandchildren in the direct line.

After three days of funeral feasting they would weep for a whole hour, and then would start to laugh loudly, to dance and to participate in the general orgy. And the worst of the matter was that those people called themselves Christians and boasted that their forebears [572] had been catechized by the apostolic fathers Alonso Bárcena and Pedro Añasco.

The custom referred to of presenting ostriches at funeral ceremonials is extremely curious, since at interments in the Calchaquí region we found the "surf" or ostrich used as an ornament on the burial containers, a fact which can be verified at the Museo Nacional [National Museum] and at the Museo de La Plata [Museum of La Plata].

C M 175 From being among the Matarães Father Pastor went over to visit the Abipones, and when he was surrounded by them he spoke to them in "Tonocotan and Guaraní" and the result was so far favorable that he was able to open the mission.

Two years later (1643) we find that the missions were advancing into Matagua and Mataguayo territory. Book XIII, chapter 24. We also

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M read in the same place that the most commonly used language in the
175 Chaco was the Tonocoté, that it was not Toba or the language of Cuzco, for it says there that "Father Juan Oloris knew the language of the Incas, and was learning Tonocoté, which was the language of the Chaco mission."

VIII

What Father Lozano Says

M What precedes has been extracted from the work of Father Techo.
114 I shall now do likewise with the Descripción Chorográfica [Chorographic
128 Description] of the Chaco written by Father Lozano and published in Córdoba in 1733.

This author retold most of what Father Techo had written in this regard, but also added many details of interest which illustrate the former text and serve to eliminate some doubts. In this chapter I shall set down all that Lozano has said about the Matacos or Mataguayos, and the references will be to the pages of the book written by this priest.

Speaking of the Paraná river, page 25, he says: "The region which this great river waters in the Chaco is inhabited by the infidel Abipones, some Mocovíes who fled from the Salta frontier, and the Callagaes, who at one time used to be called Mataráes."

Father Lozano devotes pages 39 and 51 to recounting the tradition, which he relates in his history of Tucumán, [regarding Indian migration under Spanish pressure--Translator] to explain the cause for the Chaco's dense population. Undoubtedly the Chaco was the apparent refuge [573] for the more belligerent Indians and for those in revolt, and it is probable that what was happening then was a repetition of the numberless previous migrations of a like kind. Those who were dissatisfied and answered to the Inca also fled to the Chacos.

M On page 51 Lozano gives a list of the nations inhabiting the
175 Chaco from which I shall extract the following by reason of its being relevant to this study: "Mataguayos ... Amulalaes, in times past called Matarás ... Tonocotés ... Chunipies ... Callages ...

"On the river Pilcomayo, at a distance of 40 leagues from the Andean mountains live the Tobas and Mataguayos, the two nations numbering about 4,000 members and who are eaters of human flesh." (page 53). As ever the Tobas live as close neighbors to the Matacos.

M 175 "Some 60 leagues from the mountains, the marshes of the Pilcomayo River, in the direction of the river Bermejo, are peopled by numerous Tonocotés and Lules who drew away from the territory of Tucumán at the time of the appearance of the first Spanish conquerors." (page 54)

"The nation which lives on the other side of this one (the Teuta) (1)

1. Possibly from "teuj-taj," meaning "big river," the Mataco name for the river Bermejo.--J. Pelleschi.

is the Mataguaye nation, which is the one closest to Jujuy." (page 76)

"Some are called Mataguayes Coronados and others Mataguayes M 191 Churumatas. The Coronados speak Guaraní, although this is not their mother tongue. The Mataguayes Churumatas understand and speak several tongues, such as Quichoa [sic], Guarany [sic] and Ocloya which they pick up from the captives which they hold as prisoners in their territory. They also understand the language of the Tobas. These M 175 Mataguayes were distributed in the following fifty towns: Neantiche, 621 Mocoy, Collemage, Auncapinhe, Hucohas, Hocohá, Oyaha, Natetehá, 109 Chinitiohé, Onin, Anuyguay, Alesnuy, Chayabo, Chioquiose, Hucoha, Chayquehé, Chachinamí, Pelo, Cahotochin, Nacalgoy, Chenesse, Halcacha, Cheneschá, Peque, Nitilinquin, Guays, Guocopa, Hucuchinami, Tiuquiahó, Hocalá, Leguelsehá, Oyaho, Carininquin, Yantis, Luguarache, Neglisehé, Loquelesse, Queyshé, Cotonhá, Tapela, Onoralgualache, Poytin, Hopitata, Hopitahé, Tatotehé, Lechonehá, Lohoteá, Tactoy, Apagatin, Rimpihá." (page 76)

Not one single time do we find the ending "gasta," although 194 something similar to "a" and "aho" does appear. A negative proof must not be given undue importance, yet it ought not to be completely ignored [574].

IX

The Description of the Mataguayos etc. continues

C M 175 "All these nations which we have mentioned with their towns, that is: Taynuyes, Teutas, Mataguayes, Agoyas, Xolotas, Tobas, Mocobies, Yapitalaguas, and also Aguilotes who live among the

C M 175 Mocobies, and the Palomos, which are almost at an end, all have the same customs, and are similar in every way, which is the reason for our lumping them together in order to speak of them as a whole, without differentiating between one and another. All are Caribs, eaters of human flesh, abominable in the extreme, untrustworthy and much given to warring, which flares up amongst them easily. They sometimes fight against the Guaycurús, and do so continuously against the Spanish although in their attacks upon the Spaniards they are more like thieves than soldiers for they never face them but rather attack by surprise and by ambush, making very sure before doing so of the enemy strength by C M 175 726 means of spies. These latter are tireless in their spying and will keep watch upon the Spanish positions for a year or two or three, observing everything very carefully under cover of darkness, to see whether they will meet with resistance or not, and until they are absolutely sure of their superiority, they bide their time; so when they do attack one can be sure that the result can be but one, and that there is no danger in it for them. These spies creep about at night on all fours, so that their elbows are covered with callouses, and they never attack, since they are alone, and if they are heard they scurry away with great ease, and some with the help of magic take the shape of some tame animal in order to go about their spyings more easily. Although they will not openly face the Spanish, they will, when escape is impossible, fight valorously, and sell their lives dearly, as can be seen every day and as was experienced five years ago by an officer commanding the regiment of the city of Santiago del Estero who, coming upon five Mocovíes in the forest, surrounded them with his men, but they resisted bravely, wounding many Spaniards before dying, and the last who remained alone with his wife, continued to keep up the battle, his wife supplying him with arms, and would not give himself up until he was riddled with bullets, having first wounded many Spaniards with his arrows, the C M 175 411 commanding officer almost mortally. The weapons which they all use [575] are arrows, clubs and darts, which they fashion expertly from a certain hard wood. Their darts are very long, about 15 hand breadths, and very heavy, but they use them with great dexterity and agility. The head is made from the antlers of deer, and is not firmly embedded in the shaft but rather is loose and has a small cord tied to it so that when the dart is jabbed into the body of an enemy and the shaft quickly snatched out, the point remains in the wound and the enemy kept from escaping by means of the cord, for the lance head cannot be pulled

C M 175 411 [417] from the body without making the wound much longer because a barb is carved into it and this impedes its being drawn out. If they have time they invariably decapitate those of their enemies whom they wound in battle, and they do this with great dexterity as they find the joint between the vertebrae in a moment and sever the head with one slash of their knives made from the jawbone of the "palometa" [a vicious type of fish which also goes by the name of "piraña"--Translator]. After the head has been severed the scalp is removed and then stretched and dried, and kept in order to celebrate their more important fiestas and to demonstrate their bravery.

C M 175 492 "They used, in the old days, to go about on foot, but they have since become great horsemen having stolen large numbers of horses from the ranches and towns of the Spaniards. From the city of Santa Fé alone and in the space of only 20 years they have made off with some 15,000 horses. That is why they are such good riders today, surpassing the Spaniards. Running after a fleeing horse and using only their lances to help them off the ground they will leap upon it and mount either from the side or from behind. They do not use stirrups and their saddles are very meager affairs, so much so that they often ride saddleless, but so swiftly that only rarely can the Spanish overtake them for they make their horses fly by whipping them with a three tailed lash which they always carry with them. When on the warpath they are happy with but skimpy rations which each carries for himself, and they make fun of the many preparations which the Spaniards make since they, with a small amount of half-grilled meat and whatever they can glean from the countryside in the way of fruit or other things undertake treks of a hundred leagues to wage war, their bed being the hard ground or at most a stiff cowhide. But this is nothing unusual for them since their beds are hardly of better stuff when they are at home.

C M 175 513 534 "These latter are made of straw which is spread all over the floor of their habitation which, although low-ceilinged, is very long in order to allow room for the whole family group to stretch out, each family having its own fire in the center. The oldest lies down [576] at the head in the place of greatest prestige and then, on either side, his sons according to age, followed by the grandchildren and other descendents, each with their families in such a manner that the way in which they lie down to sleep is a living representation of the family tree. They have no covering other than the branches and grasses with which they thatch their hovels, and in which a fire burns continually. The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

∞∞ The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 175 291 "The men usually go about stark naked without a stitch on, although their skins are so tanned by the rough weather that they seem to be covered by animal hide or leather, particularly the old men, who are numerous, because the inclemencies of weather do not harm them, they having been used to such rigors since childhood. I saw in Santa Fé the head of a Mocobí Indian, who must have been about 40 years old, the skin of which was more than half a finger thick. The women go about entirely covered, from head to toe, in animal skins, and the principal women attire themselves in cloth made from a pliant plant larger than the agave, which in this province is called "chaguar" and grows wild. From it they make a thread similar to that used by cobblers, and then weave their clothes to which the daughters and wives of the more important men add some black and white ornamentation. From this same fibre they also make jars which, C M [475] cemented over with wax, can hold water pretty well and also the beverages with which they get drunk.

"All the women paint their faces, breasts and arms in the C M same manner as the moorish women of Africa and Spain, and those 302 175 of most consequence do this in intricate patterns which remain in [304] the skin permanently, for their mothers from the day they are born start to fix the dyes in their very flesh with the help of the large sharp bones of certain fish. They also use a dark blue dye, although not to such an extent, on their male children. In addition to this the mothers pluck the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, leaving a completely bald swath three fingers wide running from the forehead to the crown of the head on which the hair never grows again. Thus do the Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies and Aquilotes go about, both men and women, and the latter are extremely ugly as a consequence although, to their thinking, they are very beautiful. And in order that the women pull their hair out, the Devil is wont to appear to them in the form of an Indian woman who comes out of the nearest forest covered with a net and tells them that those who will not allow themselves to be plucked are not to eat fish, for should they do so, they will die. [577] So that if some C M woman, fearing the pain, resists having her hair pulled, she later [262] allows it so as to be able to eat fish which is their favorite food. Others of these Indian nations do not make these pathlike inroads in

C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 727 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

C M 175 462 [842] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the C M [895] Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances C M towards a Spanish woman. . . .

175 [64] "Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the C M [764] old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the C M [771] shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- C M 175 spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. 756 These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

C M 114 This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

X

More on the Matarás and Tonocotés

175 The previous chapter has been an excessively long one, but only thus could Father Lozano's description be rounded off.

Following, I shall extract a little more from pages 89 and 94:

"Following the Bermejo River, and traveling on the banks of the Paraná in a southerly direction one comes to the territory of the Abipón nation. In times past it was a numerous one, for in a single town belonging to this people close to the city of Concepción, Father Juan Fonte, one of the first laborers in this Province, found upward of 8,000 souls, and in the Matará or Amulala nation which was eight leagues away from the same city, he found a town of over 7,000 inhabitants, and it is a known fact that there were more than 10,000 Indians in the vicinity of the city of Río Bermejo. At the present time they live in a Christian town of the Matará nation in the jurisdiction of Santiago del Estero. The remainder, together with the Abipones—who are not as numerous as they used to be—amount to a good number of Indians and have almost ruined the city of Santa Fé of Vera-cruz. At the present time they are called Callagaes, but previously their name was Abipones.

175 797 The last nation of the Chaco, of which we have not yet spoken, is that of the Lules or Tonocotés, which are divided into Big Lules and Little Lules. The Little Lules are the ones who actually hold to the name Lules, for the Big Lules are again subdivided into Toquistinés, Iseistinés and Oxeistinés, and Big and Little Lules are very much at odds with one another. Their ancestors 140 years ago were Christians, converted and settled in a town by Saint Francisco Solano their first Apostle, and taught and nurtured by the Venerable Father Alonso de Bargana of our Company. They were organized into a number of Encomiendas [work groups--Translator] for the benefit of the city of Talavera de Madrid, commonly called Esteco. However, alienated by the bad treatment and constraint they received at the hands of their masters, they revolted, killed one of their overseers and returned to their old haunts in the forests, which are arid places, so lacking in water that the Spanish could make no headway in them. These Indians [101] live between Tucumán and Salta, downstream from the Balbuena River, although other Tonocotés pushed on into the Chaco." [580]

175 I shall return later on to this matter of confusing Lules and Tonocotés.

On page 113 and following, Father Lozano repeats what we found in Father Techo, and establishes the fact that the Matarás of the Bermejo River region "spoke the Tonocoté language."

Father Gaspar Osorio in a letter which is transcribed on pages 174 and 175 says, among other things, the following:

"Together with a multitude of other Indians called Mataguayes, a humble and strange people who have no fixed place of abode—all these, in company with a very large group called Nataguayeos speak the same language although they differ in a few words ... further down are the Tobas ... and still further the Mocovies, Yocalaiuies—but I must inform you, Father, that all these infidels are not in the Chaco proper but only on its perimeter. In the Chaco, according to the people of Tucumán, live the Tonocoté Indians who fled from this territory when the first Spanish conquerors arrived ...

[241] "The latter are agriculturalists and sow their crops in the low country adjoining the Pilcomayo River, near which river and also close to the Yabibirí River live the people of the Chaco who are different from the aforesaid Tonocotés—a veritable 'mare magnum' of Indians."

On pages 186 and 187 Lozano tells that Father Cerqueyra used to hear confession from the Matará Indians (100 leagues from Santiago) in the Tonocoté tongue.

[266] Further on, on page 196 Lozano again refers to the Mataguayes as "fierce" and "eaters of human flesh." From the middle of the seventeenth century the Tonocotan nations began to disappear from the Chaco scene and in their place the Mocovíes, Tobas and Abipones became progressively more formidable for the Spanish colonies. The following paragraph is found on page 230: "... among 500 families

[191] who happened to come together as a group, four completely different languages were spoken: Mocoví, Toba, Malbalá, and Mataguay. Actually, in the interior of the Chaco other very different languages used to be spoken, and by much larger groups of people, for these frontier Indians are only the scanty remains of great nations which have consumed each other, hunting each other out like wild beasts. Their language is barbarous, which is to be expected from so irrational a people, and added to this difficulty is the fact that they (apparently

175 by the devil's persuasion) speak their minds in such a bare fashion and with such a paucity of words, eliminating the syllables, that it is extremely hard to follow their thinking."

In this way all report of the Tonocotés peters out, there being only a little more concerning the Mataguayos, and that not very complementary. [581]

XI

What Father Machoni Says About the Tonocotés, Date of Writing: 1732

Father Machoni Starts His Lule Grammar in this Way: To the Reader

175 797 "The language which this grammar teaches is not one in general use, but it is nevertheless the language of five very numerous nations of Indians: Lules, Isistinés, Toquistinés, Oristinés, and Tonocotés. The number of persons belonging to this last group is about 60,000. A little over a hundred years ago these five nations lived in their respective towns in the vicinity of two Spanish cities. The Tonocotés lived adjacent to the city of Concepción, at the time of this writing destroyed, but which at that time was located on a lake (1)

1. Lake Cangayé

not very far from the Bermejo or Great Chaco River. The Holy Gospel was preached to them by . . . , but all was spoiled by the Spaniards whose ill-treatment of the Tonocotés caused them to retire into the Chaco, making their headquarters on the banks of the Jabibiri and Pilcomayo Rivers."

This is not much by way of information, but at the same time it supplies us with the only argument in support of the thesis that the Tonocoté of the Reverend Bárcena was the Lule of Father Machoni.

175 A little further on the author adds the following: "If I had had the grammar and vocabulary list of the language of these Indians which Father Alonso de Bárzena [sic] composed over a hundred years ago when

SI7 Mataco
Tonocote SI 13
Chaco Indians SK4

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175 he evangelized the Tonocotés and Lules—which grammar, not having been printed, has disappeared entirely, there being merely knowledge of the fact of its having existed because of its mention in the biography of this Apostolic missionary ..."

When I treat the language of these Indians I shall return to this piece of information set down by the good Father; but for the time being I shall refer only to the actual nations—not to the language—giving their names and geographic location, although Machoni in a way confuses these two things [language and nation--Translator]. [582]

XII

What Abbot Jolis Says in His Account of the Chaco

In 1789 Abbot Jolis published his interesting account of the Gran Chaco, of which only the first volume saw the light. From this treatise I shall translate a few passages (for it is in Italian), starting on page 390.

Our Abbot starts out by making fun of the assertion that there were 60,000 Tonocotés—which Father Machoni had said lived on the banks of the Yabibirí River, between the rivers Verde and Pilcomayo—and goes on to say what follows: "Desirous of making sure of the existence of the so-called Tonocotés, I made quite searching inquiries of many Indians of several nations, both of Perú and of other localities who lived towards the South and East and who had wide knowledge of the whole Chaco area since they were expert guides, but I was not able to come across even one who knew anything about such barbarians, unless they were those well known ones who go by another name, which is "Casó," but these certainly fall far short of the number which Lozano
C gave for them."
T A little further on, on page 392 he expresses the following,
175 ever critical of Father Lozano: "In the catalogue of the various nations he mistakenly lists the Lules, the Isistines, Toquistines, Oristinés, and Tonocotés, when they are actually tribes of the same nation. He is also mistaken with regard to the Tobas, Aquilotes, Palomos, Orejones and Callagaes whom he classifies as separate

SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4
Tonocote S1 13

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175 nations when they are all really members of only one nation: the Toba; just as the Chinopies, Pasaynes, Guacaes, Atalalaes, Ocoles, Umuampas, Hipas, Yecoonitas and others of like race all belong to the Vilela nation, although each has its head or chief and lives in separation from the others. In this way was he able, not without a semblance of truth, to assert that the nations of the Chaco were without number; but he had no business transplanting to that region other more civilized nations from Perú, or less civilized ones from Tucumán.

"The nations which actually do exist in the Chaco are: [583] Chiriguanos, Matacos, Mataguayos, Tobas, Vilelas, Mocovíes, Abipones, Lules, Mataraes, Yapitalagas, Albayas or Guaycurúes, Guanas and Payaguaes."

Except for the Lules and Matarães, Jolis says that these nations continue in their heathen ways.

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175 As for the remainder, Jolis' description of the Matarães agrees
191 more or less with what Fathers Techo and Lozano tell us, but he ends with a piece of important information which is original to him and can be read on page 451 in which he tells that the Mataraes, when he retired from the country, numbered some 700 or 800 souls and lived in a little town called Matará, 36 leagues east of Santiago del Estero, bound in service to the noble Ureyola family, and he ends with these words regarding the Matarães and Mopás: "What I know very well is that neither group speaks the Tonocoté language any longer but only the language of Cuzco, that is, of Perú."

This is a somewhat strange piece of information. Be that as it may, Father Jolis' observations regarding what Fathers Lozano and Machoni tell us, together with Abbot Hervas' judgement on the same matter, will serve to excuse me if I also reject the identification of Machoni's Lules and the Tonocotés of the Jesuit Missions.

Father Jolis was in charge of the mission station at Macapillo in 1767 among the Pasainis, who belong to the Vilela nation. Naturally, his testimony is very important.

XIII

What Abbot Hervás Writes Regarding the Tonocotés

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175 Abbot Hervás published his Spanish edition of the Catálogo de las Lenguas [Catalogue of Languages] in 1800. What he says in volume I

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175 page 164 and following is so to the point that I must needs quote it in its entirety.

"The Mataguayo tongue is spoken by a quite populous nation, the most villainous in the whole Chaco, located between 21° and 24° of latitude and 315° to 317° of longitude, bordering on the territory of the Chiriguanos. The Indians of said nation are known to the Spaniards by the name of Mataguayos, a name taken from the Mataguayo tribe which used to do their agricultural [584] labor for them and also be useful in trading. The other tribes of the Mataguayo nation were known later as time went on under the names of Agoyas, Tentes, Tainoas (or Tainuzes), Palomos, Ajotas, Tañis (it is conjectured that this last tribe belongs to another nation). These names are no longer used, their place having been taken by the following: Matacos, Hueshuos, Pesatupos, Abuchetas, Imacos, etc.

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[197] All the tribes speak the same language with some small differences, as reported by Abbot Joseph Araoz, resident in Faenza, who was a missionary to the Mataguayos and compiled a grammar and a vocabulary of their language some forty years ago. However, by reason of the great length of time elapsed and owing also to his very advanced years, he no longer remembers the language which he has not attempted to keep in mind as it was useless to him under the present circumstances in which blessed Providence has placed us. The aforementioned Mr. Araoz put forth a great deal of effort together with other missionaries
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[197] towards the conversion of the Mataguayos, of which 100 were added to the Chiriguano mission station called Rosario. No small number of Jesuits, both in the past century and in the present one have striven for the conversion of the Mataguayos, but with no other result than that of martyrdom, as is recounted in volumes IX, X and XXIV of Father Charlevoix's Historia del Paraguay [History of Paraguay].

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175 "The Lule tongue, simple in its construction and different from the other American tongues, (of which I have any knowledge or whose grammatical elements I have read) is spoken in two Jesuit mission stations in the Chaco. These places, which are called Miraflores and Valbuena, belong to the diocese of Tucumán and stand on the banks of the Salado River, near the 25th degree of latitude and between 313° and 314° of longitude. Valbuena lies east of Miraflores, about twelve
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175 leagues. Father Machoni, in his Lule grammar printed in 1732 (from
114 which I have extracted the grammatical compendium which I shall publish) gives a brief account of the nations that used to speak the Lule

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175 language. But as his report does not jibe with what can be read in the
114 accounts on the same given by Fathers Techo, Lozano, and Charlevoix, I have deemed it wise to beg Abbot Camaño to help me by making diligent inquiries among the missionaries to the Lule nation, who are yet alive and reside in Faenza, and let me know their opinion regarding the mission stations where Lule is spoken in order that I may compare what they say with the opinion of Abbot Joseph Ferragut, resident of Rábena, [585] who has been a missionary to the Indians which, according to Machoni, descend from the Lules. With the help of these documents I have been able to perceive certain errors in Machoni's reports regarding the nations which speak the Lule tongue; and so that these errors may be recognized, I shall transcribe—before confuting it—the information which is contained in the initial section of Machoni's Lule grammar:

[The name "Tonocoté" is consistently spelled "Toconoté" in the following pages--Translator.]

"The Lule tongue," says Machoni "is common to five populous nations called, Lule, Isistiné, Toquistiné, Oristiné and Toconoté [sic] all of which, more than a hundred years ago (that is, since the year 1600) were converted and lived in settlements."

II

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175 "The Toconoté nation used to number almost 60,000 persons and was clse to the city of Concepción which stood on a lake a little distance from the Great Chaco River, known today as the Vermejo. The other four nations lived in very populous settlements near the city called Talavera de Madrid or Esteco which had been founded on the bank of the Salado River 60 leagues away from the site at which, being reconstructed for the third time, it perished in the earthquake which occurred in 1692, the whole city being swallowed up by the earth. The city of Concepción has also been destroyed."

III

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797 "The Jesuits Alonso Bárcena, Hernando or Fernando Monroz and Juan Viana took the Gospel, in 1589, to the Lules, the Isistinés, Toquistinés, and Oristinés, all of whom heard Saint Francisco Solano preach several times.

IV

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797 "The venerable missionaries, Father Pedro Añasco and the aforesaid Father Bárcena preached the Holy Gospel to the Toconotés and Bárcena, being sixty five years of age, compiled a grammar and a vocabulary of the Toconoté language."

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"The four nations already mentioned, which lived near the unfortunate city of Esteco, fled to the forests on the other side [586] of the Salado River and lived there, nothing further being known of them until 1710 when they voluntarily left the forests. Don Esteban Urizar, governor of Tucumán, charged the Jesuits with their care.

VI

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175 "The Matará nation and other nations of the Chaco understand
114 the Lule language because they trade with the Lules."

Following are some observations regarding Machoni's account which have received the critical approbation of Abbot Camaño:

I. Because of an old, unfounded tradition, it was thought that in the interior of the Chaco, on the banks of the Pilcomayo River (territories as yet unexplored) there lived many tribes of the Toconoté nation, of which Father Lozano makes mention in his description of the Chaco, based on the letters of Father Gaspar Osorio, celebrated Chaco missionary, written about the year 1630. In these letters the Chaco is described, information is given about its inhabitants and mention is made of the Toconotés of the Pilcomayo, who fled from Tucumán when the Spaniards first arrived close to the year 1549. These letters go on to say that, according to the inhabitants of Guadalcazar, a city in the Chaco, there was definite news of the Tonocotés in whose search Father Osorio was preparing to go.

II. Father Machoni therefore thought that the Lules were the Toconotés and that these latter were to be identified with that nation which had taken refuge in the forests. Knowing—as was stated in the accounts of the Jesuit missions—that Fathers Monroz and Viana had converted the Lules, and that Fathers Bárcena and Añasco had converted

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175 the Toconotés and merging this information with the old tradition re-
114 garding the running off of the Toconotés, he concluded that the Toconotés of the Pilcomayo, about whom nothing is known even now, were the Toconotés converted by the Jesuits and by Saint Francisco Solano, who was also apostle to the Toconotés.

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175 III. The Toconotés to whom Father Bárcena took the Gospel were the ancestors of the Matará Indians, or of the aforementioned
[101] Matarás. "Matará" is a Peruvian word used to denote a type of plant which in Spanish is often called "espadaña" and in Italian "galanga." This plant abounds in the territory occupied by the Matarás. These Indians used to speak the Toconoté language (the grammar [587] of which was compiled by Father Bárcena) as is clearly to be understood from a letter which the above mentioned Father Bárcena wrote from Matará to Father Juan de Atienza, Jesuit provincial of Perú, to whom he says the following: "In the Toconoté language and with the God-given diligence of Father Pedro de Añasco, I think that heaven is gladdened and that you, Father, would rejoice ... if you were yourself to see the fervor and care with which young and old come to hear the doctrine in their own tongues, etc." The settlement of Matará which boasted some 8,000 persons and was in the previously referred to city of Concepción was transferred to the jurisdiction of Santiago del Estero on the Salado River, latitude 28° and 30 leagues from Santiago. The cause of this transfer was the incursions of the Abipones, Mocobís, Tobas Mocosnos and Calcaquíes.

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[102] "The Indians called Mataras are the true Toconotés (numbering 60,000 in the jurisdiction of Concepción, as Machioni [sic] says), whom Saint Francisco Solano and the Jesuits evangelized. They used to be so numerous that the tribute paying Toconotés in the jurisdiction of Esteco (mentioned above) alone amounted to 30,000. There also were Toconotés in Concepción, in Santiago, and in San Miguel. In Esteco there must have been at least 100,000 Toconotés since, as has already been said, those paying tribute numbered 30,000, and the women and children did not pay tribute to the King. This once teeming nation is at present reduced to a small number of persons because of sickness and the hard labor imposed on them by the Spaniards who force them to work despite the express prohibition of doing so outlined in the Spanish laws for the Indies and the frequent and stern commands of the

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175 Catholic Monarchs. Every day and on every hand things happen in America which prove the dire need, as has been said before, of charging and entrusting the missionaries with the care of all missions if a just and useful service is to be performed both for religion and for the state.

"It is to be inferred then that the Matará nation was the Toconoté. Let us see now if the four Lule tribes or nations mentioned above, descend from the converted Lules, and whether they and the Toconotés had a common origin.

T
V
191 "In his account of Paraguay, and speaking of Fathers Fernando Monroi [sic] and Juan Viana (already cited), Techo says in 1607 that the ancient Lules used to speak several tongues, such as [588] Quechua, Toconoté and Cacana. They must needs have spoken Quechua because they were subjects of the Incas, or of the Emperors of Perú, where Quechua was the universal tongue; they must also have spoken Toconoté because they had lived with the Toconotés; and Cacana was probably their mother tongue, a name which in the Quichua [sic] or Peruvian language means hill or mountain dweller and derives from the word "caca," mountain. The Cacana language of these Lules is quite unknown, but one gathers from Techo's account of it that it differed from the Toconoté. The words "toconot" and "toconoté" have no particular meaning in the Lule tongue and I am told that the Lules have never so much as heard that the Toconotés or, for that matter, the Matarás (who are the real Toconotés) were in any way related to them—and the Indians consider that all nations who speak their same language are related. A missionary to the Matarás has told me that he heard his Indians, on one or two occasions, speak a tongue unknown to him, and making inquiries about it he learned that it was an ancient language of the Matarás. But as this missionary only knows the Quechua tongue, which was his means of communicating with the Matarás, it still cannot be decided whether Matará and Toconoté are quite separate tongues or merely dialects of the same one.

V
175 "Neither can it be ascertained whether the Cacana language of the ancient Lules is the same as that spoken by the Lules at the present time—for these latter, as I have said before, probably are not descended from those Lules converted in times past, as Machoni affirms. The latter day Lules are peace-loving and the ancient were warlike.

V
175 In the language of the modern Lules not one single word of Spanish
[177] origin is to be found and not the least sign of any religion has been
[101] discovered among them. The modern Lules call themselves "pele" (which means man) and the word "lule" has no meaning in their language. Finally, in the Jesuit accounts concerning the conversiòn of the ancient Lules, no mention is made of the Isistiné, Toquistiné and Oristiné tribes (mentioned above).

" Regarding the present day Lules I consider as certain and sure only the following information: The undefeated Don Esteban Urizar, who has been spoken of earlier, pursuing, in the year 1670, the warlike Abipona, Toba, etc. nations, came upon the Lules and finding them to be peaceable, invited them to receive certain missionaries. He gave over the Lule mission into the care of the Jesuits. [589] The Lules, however, after the founding of the mission and because of the raiding of certain heathen nations, wandered about from place to place in Spanish conquered territory until in 1752 they again settled in their erstwhile home of Miraflores called San Esteban.

"In this place there were 550 Lules. The Isistiné and Toquistiné tribes came out of the forests in 1751 and settled in Valbuena which is also called San Juan Bautista. In this settlement, in 1766, there were 740 persons of the two tribes. The Lules do not even recall the name
V of Oristiné, although it is conjectured that it may have been the name
T of the Lule tribe itself, a name long since lost in their wanderings."
174 "Five years after I had published, in Italian, the foregoing ob-
114 servations on the Lules, Toconotés, etc., Mr. Jollis brought out for all to see his Historia del Chaco [History of the Chaco] in which, without referring to my work, he confirms the corrections I there set down. Jolis considers (1) the assertion made by Machoni and Lozano that there

1. Jolis, ? : Historia del Chaco [History of the Chaco] Volume 6, Article 1 page 490-492; Article 7 page 450.

were 60,000 Toconotés on the banks of the Yabibiré River, between the Verde and Pilcomayo Rivers, as far fetched. He does not believe, furthermore, that the Churumata Indians lived in the foothills of the Andes mountains, 40 leagues from the Pilcomayo in a southerly direction and that they tilled the earth with the help of llamas (American

TV 114 174 animals). He points out that llamas can only live in cold countries, and the region supposedly inhabited by the Churumatas is hot. He says also that Lozano deceives himself when he places in the catalogue of separate nations the Lules, Osistinés, Toquistinés, Oristinés, and Toconotés which are all tribes of one and the same nation. Finally he asserts that the missionaries Pedro de Añasco and Alfonso Bârcena, with signs and sermons in the Toconoté language, which was the tongue of the Matarás, and with their own good example, were able to convert them to the Christian faith. So much for the observations of Jolis. Regarding the Churumatas he does not furnish information sufficient to know their character and language. [590]

XIV

Some Observations on the Previous Chapter

What has been quoted in the last chapter has been somewhat lengthy, but only thus could one do justice to the arguments with which Hervás rejects the name of Tonocotés given by Machoni to his Lules.

The fact is that Father Machoni himself refrains from presenting any proof in support of his guess that his Tonocotés were Lules and the Lules his Tonocotés.

When I start to take up the question of the language I shall show that it is hardly possible that the Lule of Machoni is the Tonocoté of the missionaries. For the time being, however, if I am to stick close to historical proof, I must confess that in the light of what Jolis says together with the weighty opinions of Hervás, we cannot for one moment admit that the Tonocotés and Matarães are Lules. Before being aware of what Jolis and Hervás had to say against Machoni's hypothesis, I had already begun to suspect that there was something shaky in what was there set forward regarding this matter.

Larsen, in his introduction to the edition of the Lule language (p. 24), says the following: "Father Machoni had worked for nine years in the Miraflores mission, during the tenure of Don Esteban Urizar de Arespocochega, and it follows that his word is more to be trusted than is that of later critics."

This argument would be more forceful had Father Machoni expressed himself categorically and had he not confessed that the only

SI7 Mataco
Tonocote SI 13
Vilela SI 14

V T 114 174 thing left of the grammar compiled by Father Bárcena was the fact that it had once existed.

From Machoni's account one can surmise that his opinion regarding Tonocoté was a guess, an 'obiter dictum' lacking in substance and quite valueless if compared to the solid reasons set forth by Jolís and Hervás—the former as much a missionary as was Machoni, and a better ethnologist; the latter as much a Jesuit as the priest whom he criticizes, and a better filologist.

Father Machoni was only seeking the best means for the evangelizing of the Indians; Hervás was raising a linguistic monument. [591]

One thing seems to have escaped the notice of those who have studied the problem: Hervás calls the Tonocotés, Toconotés, doubtless with ample justification, but we should have been given some reason regarding the resultant metathesis of the words "co" and "no."

I shall return to this matter after I have cited the authors of the present day, since the testimony of these throws a little light on the subject and I want to avoid repetitions wherever possible.

T 101 Techo and Lozano cannot possibly have been mistaken when they wrote "Tonocotés," nor can Hervás have merely invented his transliteration "Toconotés." The whole thing can probably be resolved in the following manner:

$$\left.\begin{matrix}\text{"To" —or}\\ \text{"Toco"}\end{matrix}\right\} + \begin{matrix}\text{"nocotés" or "noctés" or}\\ \text{"notés"}\end{matrix}$$

that is, that the prefixes "to" and "toco" serve to determine the roots "nocotés" or "notés."

In this business of Indian names the first thing to be determined is, who first called the Indians by this name? The second is, what name do these Indians use when speaking about themselves? Take for instance the name Guaycuru, which is a nickname given by the Guaraní tribes to the bad Chaco Indians and which is not to be found in any vocabulary list; this is so because the term Guaycurú is a compound one, and a search for it in that form would be about as fruitful as looking up the word "malito" ["little bad one" -- "malo" plus the diminutive ending "ito", which would not be listed in any Spanish dictionary--Translator] in a Spanish dictionary. The root is "ai"—rogue—and with it and several known affixes the word Guaycurú is formed.

XV

The Mataguayos

In the year 1884 the Reverend Father Alejandro María Covrado in collaboration with another missionary published in Florence certain Noticias Históricas [Historical Information] originating in the Franciscan College of Tarija and other missions, and in appendix L we find a very important account with reference to the Mataguayos which I shall quote: - page 535, etc. "The Mataguayos are spread over a vast region of the Chaco, especially the left bank of the Bermejo and the right bank of the Pilcomayo. On the Salta frontier they are commonly called Matacos, and Noctenes on the Tarija frontier, which is a corrupt form of Octenai, a name [592] given them by the Chiriguanos and which, in turn, appears to be a corruption of Huenneyei (1), which is what the

1. Plural of the word which means men.
(J. Pelleschi)

Mataguayos call themselves. By way of epilogue we shall give an account of what was reported, regarding the ways and customs of these savage tribes, by a missionary of this college who lived amongst them for many years:

"In their features and coloring the Mataguayos, Matacos or Noctenes, which are one and the same people, are very little different from the Chiriguanos. Their customs however are very different, and their languages absolutely so. Their villages are small, consisting usually of the several branches of only one family. They do not like to construct them in open places, preferring the dense forests and reed beds. The dwelling places are small huts made of branches or cane stuck in the ground, bent over and gathered at the ends, and covered with straw. On the inside they are similar to ovens; they are less than two meters high and their size is proportionate to the number of people to be housed in them. The ground passes for their bed, and is either quite bare or else covered with a mat of rushes or the skin of some animal. Cleanliness is utterly lacking. When the place gets to be full of fleas or other insects or filth they burn their hovels and build others not far off.

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
323 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
296 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 [276] bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her
262 hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense--sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make <u>aloja</u>. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

164 "A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts 763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in 764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

768 "On returning from the funeral all the equipment which belonged to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he [764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

765 "The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

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[774] some animal according to its merits in this life. They also recognize
776 with the name Ohott-at (1) (great spirit) a superior being who created

1. "O'hot" = spiritness; "tat" and "taj" = augmentative (J.P.)

them, but they do not worship this being at all. They are in great fear of an evil being who, wandering about at night, harms man, for which reason they call it Onnescilele (2) (night wanderer) and commit

2. "Onne" (hunat) = night; "sci" = locative; "léle" = patronimic (J.P.)

themselves to his service in order to win his good will."

XVI

Some Observations on the Previous Chapter

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114 The notes on appendix L written by Father Alejandro M.
101 Corrado are full of material of interest for this treatise. In them he establishes that "Matacos, Mataguayos and Noctenes are one and the same thing" explaining that in Salta they are called Matacos, and in Tarija Noctenes, while the Mataguayos themselves refer to themselves as Huenneyei.

According to the good Father the name Noctenes is a corruption of Octenai, a term used by the Chiriguayos to refer to these Indians. I find myself incompetent to argue this point about the origin of the name Noctenes; but since the Tobas and Guaycurúes owe it to the Guaraníes that they are known to us by their present names it would not be at all strange that a similar thing had happened in this case also.

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M
101 We are given to understand by this account that not everyone
114 calls the Mataguayos Noctenes, and one can understand that this is the cause of the disappearance of the Tonocoté nation. Tonocoté was a name limited to certain tribes only, but which doubtless was extended to many others, as far as language goes, because it was the first learned

M/T by the missionaries and because it served them well in catechising all
114 the members of the same language family.
101 Father Cardus writes Noctenes in such a way that the obtrusive "c" participates to a degree in the sound which the Mocovíes add to every [597] medial "t" (see "Mocoví Fonologia" [Mocoví Phonology]). Because of this variant we can see that the Mataco-Mataguayos could just as well be called Noctenes as Notenes.

From the sound of the name Tonocoté I would say that it is made up of Noctenes or Notenes plus the Chaquense and very Mataco prefix "to" which means "the." The final "n" is of Spanish influence and is merely indicative of nationality. A parallel to this is that we say Tobas when the actual root word is "obá"—face—because the Guaraní language attaches to all its nouns etc. a demonstrative prefix of relation which can be "t", "r", etc.

Hervas speaks of Toconotés, Techo and others of Tonocotés. To my way of seeing it the difference of opinion can be resolved in the following manner: "Noté" is the same as "Nocoté," and the prefixes "To" and "Toco" are also identical by way of the well known degeneration "Toco" "Toho" "To." I mention the latter because even though "Nocten" and "Noten" may agree exactly in that they refer to the same thing, the qualifying prefix need not necessarily be the same in both cases.

Until such time as some more reasonable explanation appears or some contrary one is put forward I claim that the terms Tonocoté, Toconoté, Nocten and Noten have identical lexical value.

Every student of the Guaraní and related Chaco languages must needs confess that "t" and "to" are never more than demonstrative prefixes. I do not deny that "Toco" may have a more concrete meaning, such as—Colorado, the Tenco River, etc. What matters is that recognition be given to the fact that the Noctenes or Notenes may be the To-nocotes of history. This would explain all the contradictions to be found in the writings of Machoni, Jolís and Hervas.

It is inconceivable that a nation as strong as the Tonocoté could have disappeared amidst so much else that has been preserved. It was the typical Mataco, Mataguayo, Matará etc. tribe which tradition says had exiled itself to the basin of the Pilcomayo—there we find Noctenes or Notenes, which are Matacos and Mataguayos. We are then in the position of having to confess that these Indians are, more or less, the Tonocotés of history, and that the name had been lost because it was a

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M nickname given them by neighboring nations who then stopped using
114 it. The name has cropped up again at the present time because the
101 missionaries have returned to those missions from the Chiriguano side and have adopted the name by which the latter usually referred to them.

Even if it were a matter of a name originating in the nation itself there would be some latitude in its transliteration, but the fact being that they are [598] nicknames invented by other Indians and heard and transcribed by the Spaniards allows of much greater freedom, and I do not believe that the hypothesis that the Noctenes of Father Corrado are the Tonocotés of Father Techo is so fantastic a one.

It may not be superfluous to note that the Indians whom we call Tobas call themselves by the name Tocouitt, which, compared to the other Mocouitt leaves as residue the word Toco which could be compared to the "Toco" or "To" of the Indians treated in this chapter. In the Toba and other allied languages the "C" is a false sound and the syncopation of syllables is the rule.

XVII

What Father Cardús Has to Say About the Matacos, Mataguayos, etc.

M
114 The Reverend Franciscan Father José Cardús published in Barcelona in 1886 his work entitled "Las Misiones Franciscanas" [The Franciscan Missions] of Bolivia in connection with the College of San José de Tarata. In it we find the following information about the Matacos (pages 250 to 258) which I shall quote, thus opening myself up to criticism for over prolixity, yet I feel I am justified because the information is important and credible since the missionaries write with exactness of what they have seen and known at close quarters.

I have not seen the Matacos and do not know them, and I am wary of allowing myself to be carried away by preconceived notions. Yet I must of necessity quote and not comment upon my authors who will thus say what they wish to say and not what some other person wishes them to say.

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting; 221 262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of [227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness 231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from 241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 579 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
533 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way--one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer--and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new
791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance,
776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a
846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which
[753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

756 or dies from purely natural causes. So when a person becomes sick or has any pain, the sorcerer is immediately called to take away the pain or to restore health. And let no one think that the sorcerer (witchdoctor) must feel the pulse of the sick person or make him stick out his tongue or confuse him and his relatives with the many questions with which our doctors confuse us—no, this would seem to them to be an admission of ignorance and furthermore, highly impertinent; nor do they cudgel their brains to find the cause of the infirmity or care whether there be herbs or special remedies to combat it—not at all, for it would only be a waste of time. Their method of effecting a cure is more simple. The patient having said that he feels pain in such and such a place, the witchdoctor does nothing other than to place his hands on the affected part, but he places them together and half-closed, in such a way that they are in the shape of a hollow vessel, exactly as when boys, with half-closed hands wish to imitate the sound of a trumpet or horn. And with their hands in that way, they begin to blow through [605] them with all the lung power at their command, accompanying the puffing with groans and howls, and persevering in this for hours on end, repeating the ceremony with greater or less frequency according to the state of the invalid and the possibility of payment for their work. Those who have nothing must yet give something to the witchdoctor, and those who have possessions must determine to give all of them to him, and they do so. Some however appear to doubt or at least to mistrust the witchdoctor's ability, for although they will give him all he asks for beforehand, they force him to return everything if his treatment is not efficacious. The one who is most fortunate in the recovery of his patients is the one who acquires most prestige, and he makes a good living. If the patient gets worse, and the witchdoctors see that he is going to die they usually declare him beyond recovery and abandon him in order not to lose prestige, and make excuse as to the incurability of the disease by claiming that some more powerful evil power is acting against him.
[763] Often, if the witchdoctor who states that the patient is past hope is of some fame, the relatives of the patient will take the sick man out to the burial grounds while he is still alive, will dig his grave, choke him to death and bury him. When, on the other hand, one of their leaders
756 554 or some person of great influence or having many relatives or who is generally well liked becomes seriously ill or is close to death, then there is usually a consultation or general gathering of all the

756 554 witchdoctors of the vicinity, who never declare the man beyond recovery but bend their every effort in making a great show of their ridiculous and childish practices in order to make death keep away. Gathered, then, in the invalid's hut, they stand about him at some little distance in a semicircle and do not take their eyes off him but observe his every movement with care. They begin to blow and gesture with their hands, now forcefully and with verve, now slowly and softly according as they see that the patient seems more fatigued or gets back some of his strength; and all this in order to pretend that they see death approaching and are trying to chase it away. In the [533] same manner they begin to sing in base, funereal tones an air similar to a continuous harsh howling, and, being guided by the condition of the invalid they modify their expressions, gestures and tone of voice. The stricken person for his part always tries, by means of his fatigue, his cries or moans, his frightened eyes and perturbed expression to let the others know what he is feeling and the state he considers himself to be in; and the witchdoctors, following these obvious signs, gesticulate more or less, blow and howl with greater or less softness [606] or loudness, come close and hurl themselves wildly towards the invalid or gently fall back a short distance. When it seems that the sick man is about to die they come at a bound so close to him, heightening their gestures to such a pitch and howling so unceasingly and in such broken, forced and hoarse tones, with eyes so wide open and fearful and with so many expressions of terror, that anyone could easily be led to believe that they do in fact see death in the guise of some deformed and terrible figure and that they wish to frighten it, make it flee or seize it. All this is done so seriously and naturally that no one would suspect them of perpetrating a hoax or deceiving; but the fact is that even if the invalid were still able to live for a while, terror would soon finish him off."

"The witchdoctors are also believed to have the power to drive away and make disappear plagues and calamities such as smallpox, which wreaks havoc among them; the lack of water or its excess and other things. To this end the witchdoctors meet, go off a little way from the camp and, seated upon the ground, like so many Jeremiahs, begin to sing their lamentations, without words of course, accompanying [534] the sad song with the choc-que-choc produced by the coming together of small stones placed in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

000 of small stones contained in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

764 "They bury their dead very close to the surface, being satisfied to dig a shallow pit into which they place the corpse half sitting up, with a few small branches beneath and on top of him and a little earth. Because of this it often comes about that jaguars, who can easily dig up these careless graves, get a taste for human flesh and become man-eaters. Sometimes the Indians put a little pot of water in the grave for the deceased's benefit. They also commonly burn a few things which he had used, and also his hut. The relatives of the deceased have to go to his burial place and lament over it, accompanying their cries with the pimpin. These wailings, according to the locality, are repeated for some days. They have also other [177] customs which they have picked up from the Tobas, to whom they are related and with whom they are friendly."

181 "It can be seen, then, that the Mataco tribe is at present a very miserable one. Their way of living and their customs, furthermore, 648 and the circumstances of our times together with the region in which they live do not point to a particularly happy future. It certainly cannot be said that the Matacos who live in Bolivian territory are declared enemies of the [607] whites or Christians, rather is it true that they sometimes work for them and say that they are friends of the whites and wish to be treated as such, in spite of the fact that this friendship seems feigned, a cloak under which they can the better steal and conceal themselves. They rustle the Christians' cattle which they exchange with the Tobas for horses, and these in turn they trade off to the Christians for other things they need, saying that they have captured these animals from their enemies."

181 "Across from the Mission of San Francisco de Pilcomayo and on the banks of the river (the Pilcomayo River--Translator) are the 797 ruins of the Mission of San Antonio, made up of Matacos brought together in 1863 and which, after having been in Bella Esperanza for two or three years were transferred to this place, where they stayed, in quite sizeable numbers, until 1879, in which year they escaped, although groups of them had fled and returned more than once before. While they remained at the Mission little or nothing could be accomplished with them in any way--they would not even consent to allowing their little children to be baptized when at the point of death. The

181 797 final pretext which they gave for escaping was that their white neighbours wanted to kill them, and it seems that this was actually the case; and the Matacos had good reason to fear some reprisal for they continued to have an understanding with the Tobas in whose company they indulged in periodic stealing. They wished, or at least some of them did, to return a short while later, but the Missionary Fathers did not dare to readmit them as they could clearly see that at that time they could not hope to accomplish anything with such a depraved, shiftless and untrustworthy people, and also because they deemed it prudent to quell the slanderous murmurings of the whites who kept saying that the missionaries were informers for the Indians and aided them in their raids."

"And nevertheless it is a fact that the Tobas and also the Matacos stole a hundred times less when they were with the missionaries than before they came to them and after they left. I merely refer to these matters in order to point out the difficulties, which still exist, of converting and civilizing the Matacos; it may be that later on the circumstances will change, and the difficulties will disappear or lessen." [608]

XVIII

Observations on the Preceding Chapter

According to Father Cardús the Matacos are the Mataguayos Notenes [sic], Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalaes, Chunupies, etc. One must not confuse these Chunupies with the Chulupies or Vilelas.

Here we see how the Noctenes can also be Notenes; and it would be interesting to find out what the dialect of the Malbalaes and Chunupies is like.

I have not thought it to be my business to abridge the reports of the Missionary Fathers because they are full of interesting facts and I am always wary of the personal element when the subject being treated is that of Indian nations around which there plays a certain discord among authors. Were I able to add anything, regarding these Indians, from personal observation, that would be another matter; but my field is limited to languages and I really needed trustworthy background material such as this in order to set the stage for what will later be said regarding the Mataco language and its co-dialects.

114 It is strange that in the last two reports so much importance has been given to the Noctén tribes about which nothing is said by authors writing in colonial times. This in itself already tends to favor the hypothesis that the Noctenes may be the Tonocotés.

In this part of the continent it does not seem that there occurred that veritable extermination of whole tribes, such as was the case with the Charruas in Uruguay and we must therefore search about somewhere for the 60,000 and more Indians who understood or spoke the Tonocoté language. Among them were the Mataguayos, who exist down to the present day; it would be only natural, then, to affirm that Mataguayo is a dialect of Tonocoté, and since Noctén and Mataguayo are closely related dialects, it follows that Noctén is as much a dialect of Tonocoté as is Mataguayo.

In the following chapter I shall set forth a report which was sent to me by Father Eliseo Molina of the Franciscan College at Tarija. [609]

XIX

What Father Doroteo Giannecchini has to Say Regarding the Noctenes and Other Mataco Tribes

101 "The Noctenes, Matacos, Vejoses, Guiznaes, and Chulupies belong to one single nation, for all speak the same language and have the same customs."

184 "Such nations are differentiated by their name and by traits which I shall call provincial or local."

101 "Our Noctenes, for example, who are the ones who inhabit the
131 country between the foot of the Pisapo mountain range and Pikírenda, 50 or 60 leagues to the east, are called Noctenes. In the vicinity of Pikírenda they take the name of Guiznaes; but they are of the same family as our Noctenes and are even related to them by blood."

"From Pikírenda onwards, some 30 leagues, more or less, and up to the Paraguay River they take the name of Chulupies; and along the whole right bank of the Pilcomayo River, from our first Noctén mission on to the Paraguay River, it is the same tribe: their

speech and customs are somewhat different, but in substance it is the same language, and they understand each other perfectly when each speaks in his own way."

"Across from the Colonia Crevaux, on the left bank towards the north there is another tribe called Chorotis which must originally have been a group captured by the Noctenes for their language is a true Mataco or Noctén dialect and many words are identical with Noctén words."

"It is true that these Chorotis live as unto themselves forming a separate tribe, but they are related to and have continual dealings with the Noctenes. Their pronunciation is, however, much clearer and more intelligible than that of the Noctenes."

"These same Noctenes are related to the Matacos of Oran and the Chaco, in which place the Noctenes are called Matacos, and the Matacos living between the left bank of the Oran River and the reservation in which we had a mission at the beginning of this century, take the name of Vejoses, and have their own local way of speaking the same language as the Noctenes and Matacos. Higher up, that is in our Bolivian Itiyuro, they again take the name of Matacos." [610]

"The fact is then that they do not have what might be called a separate language—rather do they vary the pronunciation of certain terms which does not constitute a separate language but a local variation, as happens with the Spanish of Bolivians, Argentines, Chilians, etc., and between town and town, region and region."

This description was sent to me when I asked for a Pater-noster in Mataguayo, having already received one in Nocten.

All that has been transcribed in the previous chapters shows that in the opinion of the missionary fathers the typical tribe was the Nocten, and that this is the name they use where we would say Matacos and Mataguayos. It is to be understood, then, that Nocten is nothing but a corruption of the name Tonocoté or Toconoté, already mentioned.

XX

Geographic Distribution of Mataco-type Nations

From all that has been told us by the Fathers of the Company and of the Franciscan Missions it can be deduced that the Mataco tribes occupy a diagonal region which in times past extended from the basin

101 of the Salado (1) River to the Pilcomayo, hemmed in towards the
131

1. From Matará northwards.

mountains by tribes of Quichua influence and others, and in the direction of the Río de la Plata by nations of the Toba-Guaycurú type. This vast region was bounded on the north by Chiriguano territory, and on the south by the Quichuas and Pampas of the Guaycurú-Querandí type.

It appears at present that the basin of the Salado River ceased
174 to be territory of the nomad Matacos who, in the past century, were replaced by the Mocovíes and other tribes of a more definite Guycurú type. Lozano in his first volume and on page 175 (Lamas Ed.) says that "gasta" means town in the Tonocoté language. This being the case these tribes must have entered the valleys of Yocavil and Londres also, for all the Andean region is full of places whose names end in "gasta" (2). According to my observations "gasta" is as Cacan a word

2. In none of the Mataco-Mataguayo dialects does the term "gasta" appear.

as is "ao."

In any case one thing must needs be conceded and that is that the Mataco tribes had shifted towards the southwest up to the Aconquija range. [611]

221 The Matacos, like the Tobas and other Guaycurú nations are and were nomads, and of course one cannot indicate exactly the areas frequented by them when they were on the move; at one time they would go in one direction, at another in another, according to pressure from more warlike tribes or from the Spaniards.

All agree that after the Spanish conquest numerous tribes of
221 Matacos or Tonocotés withdrew towards the Pilcomayo River basin and
174 this is exactly what would have been expected because there they were less exposed to Spanish raiders who would carry off any Indian they found to forced labor; these they used to call piezas "pieces of ordinance"--Translator].

1: Pelleschi--56 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

XXI

Ethnology of the Mataco-Tonocoté Nation or People

M
101 If it is difficult to fix the point or home territory of the Matacos, it is no less difficult to determine their ethnic origin. We lack the first requirement which is the craniology of these Indians: without that information we shall not be able to advance far, but we can at least go a little way by means of the language.

C
197 Basing my assertions on what will later be said regarding the language, I find that in the Chaco, as in the rest of America, the languages can be grouped grammatically into two large families. The one suffixes its pronominal particles, the other prefixes them. The former is represented by the nations which are Guaraní-like, and I therefore call it Atlantic, while the latter is made up of Quichua-like nations, for which reason I call it Andean or Pacific.

M
197 Holding to this classification, the Matacos as pure prefixers of the majority of pronominal particles, can be neither Lules, nor Vilelas, nor Quichuas, nor Aucasni, nor Aymaraes, since all these languages suffix these particles.

In spite of everything there exist among the Matacos and Lules certain lexical analogies which lead one to suspect some mixture, which would then certainly explain that greater placidity which is characteristic of both nations in the midst of the ferocious Guaycurues of the other parts of the Chaco. [612]

These analogies between Lules and Matacos are only of single words, but the pronouns and their particles are separated, "toto orbe." The same does not occur between the Mataco and the Quichua or Aymará: the first and second person primitive pronouns are somewhat more than merely similar, and this is reason enough to recognize that there was some original contact between the two peoples, though it is true that the Matacos are more backward.

To say that any given grouping of American Indians is of mixed origin is to come close to the truth, for in all probability not one is to be found which is not. In the present instance and judging from the point of view of linguistics, I tend to believe that the Mataco has in it some Lule and some Quichua.

This is not enough. In the reports which preface this study we have seen that the Matacos and Guaycurú-Tobas always go about together,

197 and we are assured that they differed more in language than in their manner and customs, that is to say, that they had in them a good bit of Toba, Mocoví and Abipón. This, linguistically speaking is a fact, for those differences to which the missionaries made reference are lexical rather than grammatical in character. Pronouns, their particles, suffixes of plurality, all point to a common origin, that is, to hybridization.

It is common knowledge that the Matacos and Tobas always went about together, as though they recognized their kinship.

[174] These considerations induce me to believe that the Matacos are the offspring of Guaycurú fathers and Lule mothers; and the Tobas, a mixture of Guaycurúes and Matacos.

The Guaycurúes are related linguistically to the Guaraníes, and these, in turn, to the Caribes and Mojo-Maypures, and they may also be related to the Matacos.

That Mataco has some Guaraní and Chaquense (Guaycurú, Toba, Mocoví, etc. tribes) is to be gathered since all of them prefix their pronominal particles; but the strange thing is that Quichua also has a place here, it being of all the most prone to suffixing.

All these linguistic anomalies can be explained if we admit 174 what Montecinos says, that approximately since 500 B.C. to about 500 A.D. there were successive massive invasions of Perú from Brasil and Tucumán.

Observation teaches us that first and second person singular 197 pronouns and first (excluding the hearer) [613] person plural, correspond 174 to the predominant group, be it by conquest or for some other reason. It is precisely in these persons that the analogy between Quichua and Mataco are most exact, it being only proper to give warning that Mataco, like Mojo, is logical even in its possessive particles, a phenomenon which does not occur in Quichua. (1)

1. Because "Ñokha" is--"I"; "y" subfixed--"my" or "mine," in Quichua.

Aymará and Araucano register the same pronominal influence and such analogies lead us to seek craniological proof, and also to study Mataco along with Quichua Aymará and Araucano.

174 Let us suppose that the Chaco, or rather the highlands which surround it, had been occupied by tribes corresponding to those we call Lules

174 and Quichuas, a peaceful people, docile and given to civilization, shall we say Diaguitas or Pueblo people. With the passage of time these would be attacked by nomadic tribes, Juries, a more or less Guaycurú type:- these latter would overrun the territory, killing and laying waste, taking possession of the land and of the women and children of the defeated.

From interbreeding with the Lules, to judge from the language, the Vilela and other similar nations could have sprung; and from contact with the Andean group, the Mataco nation and its ramifications.

Other hordes would sweep into the land at a later date, of a more pronounced Guaycurú type and by extermination on one hand and interbreeding on the other, there would spring up the Mocoví, Abipon, and the Toba, which latter, as I believe is a cross between Mataco and Mocoví, that is, Guaicuru [sic].

The Lengua, Payaguá and remaining tribes of the Guaycurú type still remain to be studied, but the preceding observations seem to explain, up to a point, the genesis of the Chaco Indians.

An interesting link is still missing, and that is the Charrúa. The most ferocious and indomitable of all the Indians ever encountered in Argentina, who did not give in even to the efforts of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus. A people given to swallowing up others, and later itself cornered in Uruguay, it disappeared from its theater of operations leaving only the meagerest traces of its existence. Yet the time was when it used to sweep the basins of the Paraná, Uruguay and Río de la Plata. When the Spaniards arrived, and for two centuries more they were the scourge of Santa Fé, Entre Ríos and Montevideo. Because their [614] language was guttural and very difficult, I claim them as being of the original Guaycurú type, that Chaco grouping which was an offshoot from Carib stock, at its most savage.

It is logical to attribute to the most warlike tribes a share in the heritage of the ferocious Mocovíes, Tobas, etc., and to suppose that the purer the blood, the less will be the disposition to take on the Quichua or European civilization.

Today it is the task of anthropology to resolve this problem. In the place where the Lules were snuffed out in the past century there must be considerable skeletal remains. The same must be the case with the Charrúa burial grounds in Uruguay. We still have the Matacos, Tobas, Mocovies, etc., with us. Let us hope then that men competent

174 in these matters will give serious study to these skulls and in that way confirm my hypothesis based on what the languages themselves allow us to glimpse.

114 The ethnology of a given people, if it is to be of value, must include the anthropology of that people. The language alone is insufficient because of the well known tendency to adopt foreign elements on both a large and a small scale.

I am sorry that I do not know as much as does Quatrefages; but if a man as eminent as he is has had to confess his ignorance in linguistic matters, much more so may I leave the question open until such time as the anthropological problems which Argentina poses to the authorities in that field, have been solved. I am satisfied to point out the paths which I believe I have found and to declare that judging by extant languages, everything in the Chaco is a mixed bag.

Further than this I do not dare to push my hypothesis. Let this quote from Quatrefages found in his "Hommes Fossiles et Hommes Sauvages" [Fossil Men and Savage Men] serve me as an excuse: "Furthermore in problems of this kind the physical characteristics are in every way more conclusive as evidence than all others. A nation can change in language, in customs, in industries, sometimes in a relatively short period; but height, skin, cranial shape—that cannot be lost so quickly" (p. 577). [615]

XXII

The Language of the Matacos

One of the mysteries of modern linguistics is the lack of information on this interesting group of languages, spoken by tribes which still occupy a considerable territory in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos.

Little enough was known about the Mocoví, Abipon, and Lule, but that little was enough to reveal the grammatical workings of the respective languages. Yet about Mataco neither Hervas nor Adelung

114 can tell us more than that it existed.

It is hard to understand how the Mataco texts of Jesuit Mission times could have disappeared so completely, a thing lamented over by Machoni more than half a century before the suppression of the order.

I cannot believe that there does not exist, somewhere, a written record of some sort regarding it, and I do not despair of being able to run it down; but for the time being I must limit myself to the works of Father Romedí (of the Seraphic Order), to the notes which were presented to me by the Franciscan College of Tarija and finally and in the place of honor as it were, the field notes of engineer Juan Pelleschi. (1)

1. When I wrote this the Vejoz manuscript had not come into my hands.

In the chapters which treat the subject of the history of the Tonocotés it seems to be proved that the Tonocotés, Mataguayos, Matacos, and the Mocovi-type Guaycurú tribes, were groupings of one single race, which spoke different dialects but which had a great deal in common.

We know now that the Noctenes, Mataguayos, and Matacos are 197 tribes of the same family and speak dialects which are as similar to each other as are Portuguese and Spanish. These dialects, by their grammatical construction can in no way be confused with the Lule of Machoni, since the former prefix their pronominal particles while the latter suffix them.

Hervas and Jolis (2) have disproved Machoni's theory that 114

2. In Italian, as in Latin, "J" sounds like "Y."

[616] the Tonocotés who spoke Lule had taken refuge in the Pilcomayo River basin. Neither at that time nor at the present has any tribe been discovered to correspond to Machoni's Lules in that area, but there do exist there many of the Nocten, Mataco and Mataguayo type whom I suppose to be the real Tonocotés or Toconotés.

193 From the most cursory examination of the Mataco or Mataguayo, or Nocten tongue it is evident that it is a language which prefixes its pronominal particles, while the Lule has just as strong a bent towards suffixing them.

197 [114] This fact alone is sufficient to separate Mataco from Lule with a barrier which is not to be bridged by Father Machoni's brief and indirect reference. This does not mean that I deny that Mataco and Lule may share common words—these analogies will be noted later—but the grammatical mechanism and the pronouns themselves point in absolutely opposite directions.

Following the classification which we have been setting down in this study, Mataco corresponds to the Atlantic type insofar as the position of affixes is concerned, although it is my impression that it leans more closely towards the Moja branch than towards the Guaraní, in spite of the greater immediacy of the latter.

114 197 Before proceeding further let us examine the arguments on which Machoni rests his hypothesis that the Tonocoté of Techo and others is really Lule:

In the first place the Lule language is not widespread but limited to the five nations: Lule, Isistiné, Toquistiné, Oristiné (1)

> 1. The Missionaries of whom Hervas made enquiries deny that there be Oristinés.

and Tonocoté. The Tonocotés numbered 60,000 souls. (Machoni's prologue.)

Secondly, the Tonocotés in the XVII century lived near Concepción del Bermejo and were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena and Anasco. These Indians taking offense at the Spaniards, went off to the banks of the Yabebirí and Pilcomayo Rivers. Ibid.

Thirdly the Lules, Isistinés, Toquistines and Oristinés were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena, Monroy and Viana in 1589 and visited by Saint Francisco Solano. Ibid.

In the fourth place the Isistinés, Toquistinés and Oristinés fled to the Chaco and there remained for over a hundred years until in 1710 they came before don Esteban de Urizar y Arespacochaga who placed them in the Valbuena and Miraflores reservations; Father Machoni was with them for 9 years. [617]

114 In the fifth place, Bárcena compiled a grammar and vocabu-
197 lary of the language of these Indians when he evangelized the Tonocotés and Lules. Machoni confesses that nothing remains of this grammar other than the mention of its existence which appears in the missionary's biography. Ibid.

Conclusión: Ergo this Lule tongue is Tonocoté, common to the aforementioned five nations, and used by the Matará nation and many others of the Chaco for the sole reason that they are neighbors of the Tonocotés and Lules and trade with them.

Regarding all this series of non sequiturs Fathers Yolis [sic] and Hervás have given full account. Machoni confesses that nothing remained of Tonocoté other than the unconnected bits of information which he reports, which certainly have no philological interest whatever.

The Lules of Machoni may or may not be those referred to by Father Techo, but with regard to the Tonocotés Machoni has not given the least proof that they are the Lules; and it goes without saying that the language which he called Lule cannot possibly be stretched to include the Tonocotés.

Even as regards the work of the missionaries this identification of Lules and Tonocotés was unfortunate, for in that region of the Pilcomayo live the Noctenes, Matacos, Mataguayos and Tobas, for whom the Lule tongue is hardly the one to be recommended as common currency.

Had Hervás known about the prefixing character of the Mataguayo and Nocten etc. languages, he would have been even harsher in his criticism of the Lules-Tonocotés of Father Machioni [sic].

Being, as he certainly was, a good philologist he would have known that in a hundred years a suffixing language could hardly change over into being a prefixing one. This violent change is not to be found in any of the other Chaco languages. The Toba of today is the same as the Toba of Bárcena's time, and so also are the other languages.

It must be conceded then that the Lule of Machoni was not and
197 could never possibly be the Tonocoté of the early missions.

Since we know that the Mataguayos spoke Tonocoté in the period about which we are writing, and that at the present time Noctenes, Mataguayos, Matacos and many other tribes speak dialects of Mataco,

until the contrary is proved we must suppose that Mataco is Tonocoté.
197 A language as strongly rooted as this one could not possibly have become lost in the Chaco.

The Mataco language is one of the most widely used languages and is spoken by the largest grouping [618] of Indians in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos, and yet we do not find it mentioned in any writings. One can therefore only deduce that the language of the Matacos is Tonocoté; this being the only rational hypothesis which for the present fits the case.

As far as languages go we can state that what the Mojos are to the Chiquitos, the Matacos are to the Chaco tribes of the Toba-Mocoví type, and just as the former have their Mosetana tribes so the latter have their Lules and Vilelas.

XXIII

Regarding the Names Tonocoté, Mataco and Mataguayo

101 Nothing better has been written about this than what Hervás has set down in his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" (Catalogue of Languages) on pages 168 and 172. He asserts that the Tonocotés are the Indians called Matarás and says the following:- "Matarás is a Peruvian word which is used to signify a grass which in Spanish is often called "espadaña," etc. The words Tonocot and Toconoté (read Tonocoté) have no meaning whatever in the Lule language, according to the missionaries to the Lule nation, who have told me that they have never heard that the Tonocotés or the Matarás (who are really the
101 Toconotés) (1) were in any way related to the Lules. Yet the Indians
191

1. Hervas always writes Toconoté instead of Tonocoté.

consider other tribes related to theirs when they speak the same language; a missionary to the Matarás has told me that he heard his Indians speak, on occasion, a language which was unknown to him and that when he had inquired as to what language it was he learned that it was an ancient language of the Matarás; but since this

missionary knows only the Quichua tongue, with which he communicated with the Matarás, it still is a moot question as to whether the Matará and Tonocoté languages are totally different or only dialects of the same language."

This short paragraph is one more proof of what I have been saying for some time, which is that the Fathers of the Company left more Quichua than they found in the regions which they evangelized. The Indians learn the neighboring languages with great ease: they have good memories, a well tuned ear and they pay much attention to everything which may be useful to them. [619]

The names Mataco and Mataguayo which in Father Techo refer to certain groupings and today are generic names of these tribes and their languages, are not the names with which the Indians used to refer to themselves. They called themselves Uicquñ.

To go into the etymology of the name Mataco without knowing who the first people were who applied such a name to these Indians would be a sterile job. It is probably a Quichua term or root and the only thing which might be said about it is this: that in the terms Churu-matas, Matará, Mataco and Mataguayo we find the common root Mata, which doubtless referred to some thing which was called by that name and which had to do with the persons or customs of these Indians or with the region they inhabited.

It is a strange thing that almost all the names by which we know the indigenous peoples of the Americas are artificial ones, as for example the name Guaraní; and the Matacos are by no means an exception to this rule. The Tobas called themselves Ntocovítt, and the Matacos, Uicquñ. Later, if we are able to prove that the Mataco "cq." is a mutation of "tt.," it may be seen that Uicq and Uitt are simply two variant forms of the same word meaning man.

Conclusion

An account has already been given of the Mataco Indians from the time of the coming of the Spaniards and the conquest of Tucumán in the sixteenth century. As the reader must have remarked we owed the information which we had to the Missionary Fathers, whose only object was to win souls for heaven and whose efforts in the direction of learning was limited to the end of reproducing for their catechumens, in a

000 more or less understandable way, the mysteries of the Christian religion and the teachings conducive to them. Their endeavors were often crowned with great success and where the pernicious example of long-standing but bad Christians did not interfere to sterilize the results of conversions, the new Christians did honor to their teachers and to the religion they professed, as was seen in the Guaraní missions.

The savage is an eminently conscientious man and does his duty with the regularity of a machine. It is the civilized man who has taught him to profess one faith and put into practice another. [620]

In spite of all criticism to the contrary it is unquestionable that the Missionary Fathers made their Indians understand the mysteries of our religion as well as many who are not Indians understand them. It is a fact, nevertheless, that for many persons it would be preferable to know the syntax and vocabulary of a new language without the intervention of interpretations which are sometimes forced with the object of introducing a new stream of ideas and concepts.

If this is true of the language, how much more is it so of the customs, habits, etc. of those who speak it. The missionary has only one dilemma: that which is not God's is the Devil's, and the God of the Indians, regardless of how good he may be, is a Devil in his eyes. Apart from all this, to think otherwise would expose them to grave charges from the direction of their superiors, and something worse from the direction of the Church.

We therefore always need the research of a lay person who will describe the Indian and his language to us without any preconceived ideas about either one. We want to hear someone who has studied the Indian in his savagery and who is ready to recognize that the evil of the good Indian may be a better thing than the good of an evil man who may call himself civilized: I am speaking of "good" and "evil" according to our idea of these two qualities.

114 This lack has been filled in a very special way by engineer Juan Pelleschi in his well known Otto Mesi nel Gran Ciacco, [Eight Months in the Gran Chaco], but there were missing from that great work the abundant and excellent vocabularies, dialogues and sentences which remained unedited in his travel portfolios. In these there is set down the way of thinking and of speaking of the Mataco Indian when he is "at home" in his forest and in his savage simplicity. Mr. Pelleschi has not wished to correct the Spanish syntax of the informant when the sentence was invented by him in one language and then the other, which gives even greater value to these illustrations of what the Uicquí tongue is like.

114 Mr. Pelleschi has done what Dr. Leuz is doing in Chile for the Araucanos, and with as much ground for applause.

In the author's published work my secretary and I have had no part other than that of ordering it alphabetically and compiling a Mataco-Spanish lexicon, without which no study of a language can be considered complete.

As the original is in Italian I have had to translate that part of the book which is here reproduced, leaving the checking and
000 correcting to the author. The English understood the importance of the work before [621] we did and it was shameful that the most modern and most complete description of our Indians was written in a foreign language and had not been put into the national tongue. The Geographic Institute, by means of this publication has erased that black mark, and has gone further by adding the vocabularies etc., which are lacking in the original and which give so much greater value to this work.

It is not altogether impossible that the author will make a study, later on, of what is here published in order to perfect his essay on the grammar of the Mataco language. But even if he were not to do this, what has been published is enough to give us a pretty full grasp of what the language of these Indians is and what it is not.

As the translation has been checked by the author himself, those passages which may appear to be incomplete or in which it may be observed that extra material has been inserted, are to be laid at the author's door, as must also all new material with which the work has been supplemented.

In the key which precedes the vocabularies the derivation of
104 words and phrases will be designated together with the key letter. As will readily be understood, this is a valuable addition to the vocabularies, for a new word, heard only once and from one person is exposed to error, but when its lexical and phonetic value is attested several times over, little doubt can remain about it. On this score also is Mr. Pelleschi's work highly interesting, it being a step in the direction of a better understanding of the tangled phonology of the Chaco languages of the Guaycurú type, of which Mataco is an important part.

000 The map was made by Güido Jacobacci, Engineer, in accord with information which we have given him and with the help of the map of Father Jolis and Corrado, and also of Araos'. One can see

000 quite clearly there the Mataco Region, and the enormous territory which the nation which we call by this name used to occupy and still does. It is a further contribution to the geography of Argentine languages, being a part of the ethnic map of the Republic, and as such do we offer it to our readers.

Some of the names on the map have a date under them, which refers to a historical fact, that is, that that "Nation" was to be found there in the indicated century, but does not belong there now.

The first part, for which I alone am responsible, is complemented by a facsimile reproduction of Father Jolis' excellent map [621], so little known amongst us and which is nevertheless the best which I have come across of the region it covers. It is full of interesting historical and ethnic facts, and has longitudinal graduations geared to that meridian which was always taken as the starting place in maps and reports in centuries prior to our own.

In Mr. Jacobacci's map one can plainly see the huge area of Argentina occupied by the Mataco-Mataguayo nation; and it seems ever more strange that both they and their tongue could have remained so little known. Mr. Pelleschi has rendered a very real service to Argentine ethnology and linguistics with his two works, and the Geographic Institute's contribution is no less valuable, for through its good offices his work is made known and placed within everybody's reach.

(To be continued)

1:Pelleschi--68 C-5 (ca 1875) 1876 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

Bulletin of the
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Volume XVIII

[173] The Mataco Indians and their Language

by
Juan Pelleschi
Civil Engineer

PART ONE

Chapter I

Geographic Situation

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648

The Matacos are hemmed in on the West by the Salta border line and on the East by the Toba frontier. Caught thus between two enemies, they have of necessity formed alliances, the Eastern Matacos with the Tobas and the Western Matacos with the white colonists, each group warring upon the other. In spite of this division the Matacos hold to their common language jealously, although it is true that there are slight dialectal differences to be noted. Thus, for example, the Eastern Matacos almost invariably say "quiá" and "tzá" where their Western counterparts would say "chá," regardless of the fact that any one of these expressions is employed without difficulty by members of the same tribe. The same happens with "quió," "tzó," "chó"; for example: "doe" can be "tzonaj," "quionáj."

C
721

Each nation of Indians has its own territory and will go to war over the smallest patch of land just as we would. The land is also subdivided among the tribes of one nation and these may not overstep their bounds without causing war. These wars are very frequent for the many reasons set down elsewhere and because of the marauding spirit which dominates the Indians -- thus it is that whenever they learn that a tribe [174] has become rich, for one reason or another, in animals or

1: Pelleschi--69 C-5 (ca;1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

C
721 belongings, they try to despoil it by surprise. These actions are always followed by deaths, wounds and imprisonment, which are cause enough for new wars, made without warning, to which end each has informers and spies in the other camp.

Fortune has for a long time favored the Tobas who occupy the best lands, that is, those bordering on the Paraná and Paraguay rivers for about sixty leagues inland and for hundreds of leagues along the rivers' courses; furthermore because of clandestine commerce with Corrientes and the Republic of Paraguay these Indians have been able to secure some firearms, and as they are the furthest away from the white man's ever closing ring, they naturally receive an appreciable contingent of rascals who are attempting to escape from them.

This is why the Vilelas and Chulupíes have become mixed in with the Tobas, which the Mocovíes, who used to live in the Southwest, in direct contact with the Santa Fe and Santiago frontiers, are also doing and who furthermore have so much in common with them as regards language -- for I have found among them many identical words. This very thing is what is happening to the Matacos.

Chapter II

Physical Characteristics of the Matacos

M
142 The physical differences between the Tobas and the Matacos are noteworthy. Generally speaking, the Mataco is half a hand's breadth shorter than the Toba, though this does not mean that he is a small man when compared to us. He has an extraordinarily deep chest, a bull-like neck and well developed muscles; he is thick set, his head large, his face broad and with very salient cheekbones.

They have long lower jaws, very much inclined downwards; their foreheads are hardly ever broad but often seem even smaller than they are in reality because of their unkempt hair. Their feet are medium sized, their hands small, well formed and admirably joined to the
M arm, especially in the women; the hair on their faces is scanty. Of
142 their thirty-two teeth, the canines have seemed to me, in general
262 very little pronounced, which may have its explanation in the fact

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some [262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat [263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of [262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and [756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black, [165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of 302 [765] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

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take pains to comb themselves, particularly the women. I remember [302]
an occasion when I wished very much to obtain a paddle, made of M
"palo-fierro" [iron-wood--Translator] and having two blades, the 123
blades ending in long, narrow points. It belonged to an Indian friend 593
of mine who had quite a beautiful wife. I offered him a comb in exchange for the double paddle, but after having considered the matter for a while he refused to make the exchange. His wife seemed to me to be very sorry that the deal had not come off, and she must have made use of all her wiles for on the following day her husband spontaneously came [176] and proposed that we make the exchange. It may be that the reader would have thought better of my being a little more generous, but let it be remembered that if I had given my comb away I would not then have been able to obtain the paddle, which was of more interest to me than the Adamic Indian couple.

C
What I have said of the Matacos can also be said of the Tobas, 142
with this addition, that the Tobas are taller than the former Indians 102
and generally show a larger expanse of forehead -- I do not know if they are actually broader -- owing to their habit of tying their hair up with a band. This information is true also of the Mocovíes and Chulupíes, all of whom inhabit the Argentine Gran Chaco, to the north of which, in the Bolivian Chaco, live the Chiriguanos and Cirionoses.

C
M
Among all these Indians the skin color varies between that of new 142
copper and mud, there being also, here and there, some with blackish markings or blemishes.

Chapter III

Some Ethnic Characteristics

M
It is customary to say that these Indians are extremely dirty, but 515
I have some very serious doubts in that regard, for I have seen them, in the summer time, run into the river for pleasure's sake at certain fixed hours of the day in great numbers, both men and women, each sex in its own determined place. This would appear to be a custom and not a mere whim. In addition to this they often go into the water to fish. It is true that they seem to be dirty, mostly because of their

skin color, and also because of the scratches which become caked, and 515
because of the sun's burning which wrinkles the almost scorched skin, especially on their shoulders; and finally because they go about barefoot and naked in the mud, through the underbrush and bushes, and as they lie down on the bare earth it is only natural that they should be covered with dust, just as we, who wash a thousand times a day do a thousand times become dirty again. They are not -- pardon the expression -- grubby, and I firmly contend that they are not dirty by nature.

An Indian camp is composed of an undetermined number of 342 [361]
dwellings, made by sticking branches into the ground and tying them together on top in the form of a cupola. Onto this frame they throw quantities of straw until it looks like, not a hut, but a wagon so loaded with hay as to cover the very wheels.

They hurl the straw from quite some distance and yet so accurately as to cause wonder, so much the more as it is the women who do this work. A hut, once finished, is so strongly constructed that a man can stand and move about upon it, and it is quite waterproof.

[177] Each chief has his own group of huts, like so many barracks, and sometimes, especially on the occasion of a declaration of war, [622]
many chiefs gather.

The huts are usually so low-ceilinged that one cannot stand up inside, but they vary as to length according to the rank of the family and the number of families which live in them. The long huts are somewhat humped, with two or more doors. The entrance ways are usually protected, on the windy side of the hut, by a fixed windbreak -- one must stoop in order to be able to enter.

A hut is divided into the following parts: the kitchens and the sections where sleeping, sitting, working etc. is carried on; however, there is no material separation between these parts.

The kitchen is nothing more than a swept space on which a fire [354]
is lighted, but only when the weather is cold or when the family mother is in mourning, during which time she does not leave the hut for a year, [765]
or allow herself to be seen, nor does she speak except when strictly necessary. The usual thing is to cook food outside near the entrance. There are as many kitchens as there are families.

The bedroom consists of that portion of the hut where they 352
place skins and clothes, if they have any, upon which they lie and which they put on when they go out if it is cold. On the walls at the

head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and "hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usually at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

On seeing this couple, almost in a state of stark nakedness, seated on a bench among the cylinders and pistons of the engine, motionless for hours, we were necessarily reminded of the earthly paradise.

When among strangers the women are quiet and impassive, but when left to themselves they are full of fun and as playful as children. And this is generally the Indians' character.

The women take up a somewhat strange posture with their hands when they are standing. As they have no pockets to put them in, or fan with which to occupy them, or what have you, they place them upon their breasts which serve as supports for their arms which together rest upon them.

It would seem that such a habit would enlarge the breasts, but this is not so. The breasts are broad, it is true, but short and erect while the women are young. After expertoe virum, and having given suck to one or more children, the breasts shrivel and retract in a very unaesthetic manner, to tell the truth. It is to be noted that both men and women age early there, and also die early, and to this must be attributed the fact that there are few gray hairs even when there are faces and bodies so wrinkled as to make one believe that their owners must be as old as Methuselah.

I have gone into some detail in this matter of the breasts because it is known that in other regions, according to what is said, the women, when they give suck, give the nipple over the shoulder to the child which they are carrying on their backs. The fact is that no such thing occurs here.

The women, along with the men, have abundant, coarse, straight hair. They wear it rather long but not as long as they might, for it is shortened by wearing it in an unkempt fashion (which serves them as protection for eyes and forehead against the sun) and also by cutting.

They cut their hair, that on their faces as well as that on their scalps, with the jaw of a fish called palometa, which is armed with extraordinarily sharp teeth placed in two rows. The upper teeth dovetail exactly with the lower.

The palometa, the raya (ray--Translator) and the yacaré (alligator--Translator) are the scourge of those who bathe in this river and the lakes or pools which are fed by it. The palometa snaps, tears

136
out chunks of flesh, and can even [180] be of some slim service, similar to that which is told concerning that fellow in the "Ricciardetto." It is an ovoid, laterally flattened fish. The ray is round, vertically flattened and has three barbs on its tail. It can make a very painful and dangerous wound with the middle barb when the fish is stepped on and lashes out with its tail. Some grow to be over a meter in diameter. It lies on the bottom of quiet pools, as close as it can to the bank; it would seem to be viviparous. The yacaré, a kind of crocodile, will without warning bite the leg or arm of an unfortunate father, drag him to the bottom and there devour him.

So it is that bathing, which was so necessary to cool ourselves off in the suffocating heat, was always embittered by the presence of these maneaters.

The married woman is faithful to her husband by inclination, 837
education and fear. There are tales of terrible revenges wreaked by husbands upon their unfaithful wives, over whom they have power of life and death. While they are single they can be and often are free in their ways. It cannot be doubted that the whites attract their inter- 609
est, if matters of racial difference do not intervene, for the poorest white is always in a position to give better presents than is the richest chief.

These women love decorations and clothing, but have no use for 291
skirts or corsets. They wrap themselves from the waist down in a blanket, and hold it up with a belt or cord which is hidden behind the fold of cloth. In addition to this they know how to distribute these rags in such a way as to accentuate their good figure and yet at the same time not encumber themselves, a skill not to be expected on first seeing them. Their dress consists of robes, and when they have any they put them all on, be it winter or summer, partly because of the nomadic existence they lead and partly because they like to do so. One might say that the saying: what wards off cold also wards off heat, is particularly applicable to them.

Both men and women love bright colors (particularly red) and [822]
variety, but they also like white cloth. When they put on any garment they always do so in such a way as to leave one arm free. The women have a high regard for the kind of shirts which we wear.

The women make their own ornaments out of leather and broken 301
shells, achieving a certain elegance of form, though with a greater 291
or lesser degree of rusticity. They wear, from childhood, a sort of

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

The women themselves also weave the wool gathered from the few sheep they possess and arrange the natural wool colors in regular patterns of stripes or squares. They do not know how to make more ornamental figures.

In order to weave they stick four forked pieces of wood into the ground in the form of a rectangle, place a pole across each end to which they affix the warp threads and with a wooden blade about a hand breadth long thread and tamp the wool into place.

They call "weaving " potzin; the "loom" noccaléi, and the "threads" huoléi. These words, which have not the least affinity with the corresponding Spanish words, assure us that the Indians did not learn weaving from the Spaniards -- not that one should lay great stock either by similarities or by the lack of them in words to buttress a judgment of this nature (on the contrary, it happens that the Mataco always do all they can to keep from adopting foreign words to express new things, preferring to use their own words with small changes) but the fact of the matter is that we are not here confronted by one of these circumlocutions. Another possible cause for error might be found in the great difficulty which they have to pronounce words as we do. Furthermore there is the habit of taking Spanish words and modifying them to suit their own language as when they make from "cabra" [goat--Translator] caila, and from Pedro, Peiló.

All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

this shared work has its cause in that the last two mentioned products must necessarily be gathered within a certain limited period and therefore the Indians have need of the combined effort of all the workers they can muster in order to harvest all they possibly can. 222 462

For the making of nets they must first, naturally, begin by making twine, which they call niñ'hiôi. They get their textile material from a bromelia which in Quechua is called chaguar (a name now also used by the white settlers) and in Mataco hûié. They steep the leaves of this plant in water for a time and then comb them with a clam shell. Once this has been done the residue is put out into the sun to dry and whiten. The last stage is that of twisting the fiber -- a wad of it is held in the left hand and rubbed back and forth [182] on a leg, upon which they sprinkle a little gypsum in order to avoid getting hurt. This gypsum powder is called maccotac-muc. 283

The twine being thus ready they make not only nets with it but also ropes, which they call niñ'hioi-less, which means family or skein of threads.

Some of the Indians have special skill in making weapons, and make them as a means of barter with their companions. They use a very hard wood for the bow, and ostrich [rhea--Translator] tendons or strips of hide for the string. The arrow shaft is made of cane, the head of some hard wood, often tipped with bone and barbed like a fish hook. 411

Chapter V

Marriage Customs

Those who do not know anything about the Indians may believe that they lead morally and materially sterile lives. Yet this is not actually the case: the savage loves, hates and knows what ambition, enjoyments, dangers and glory are. He is acquainted with religion and with fear. In these primitive societies the whole gamut of human affections is experienced precisely "as among the whites," as Faustino used to say to me when I asked him about the intimate experiences of the Indian way of life. 152

Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception. 462

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chāguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have. 595 422 556

Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families. 586

In places such as these in which women lose their attractions at M 595 an early age and in which men are decimated by the constant wars, the custom of polygamy is a social necessity for the tribe which would otherwise run out of members, and a physical necessity for the men M 837 and for many women who would otherwise stay single. Nevertheless there are not lacking loose women, free in their favors, for whom the Indians use the name of amoeccue.

The man is jealous and cruel to his wife if he suspects her of infidelity. While we were visiting the camp of Peilo we had the opportunity of hearing a husband, deep within one of the huts, beat and threaten his wife with death because she had been careless and fallen into the hands of a soldier. Nu-a-ilon-lã (I shall kill you) he ground out between his teeth. On another occasion a woman, after her husband had been absent for two years, took up with another man; the husband returned, lay in wait, ran after and caught his wife and slit her belly open with a knife before the whites could prevent it. This woman did not die and as soon as she was well returned to live with her would-be murderer.

When the Indians intend to get married they dye their cheeks M 584 and the region around the eyes red. The man will give his love a [302] present at the time he makes his proposal and if the woman gives [184] an affirmative answer the man gives her a dowry of whatever he has, such as sheep, chickens, skins, etc.

If the families approve of the union the couple goes to live near one of them, should they not approve then the pair leave the hut and often even leave the camp. Once consent is granted, the nuptial ceremony is the act of consummation.

Among the Chiriguanos, when a man wants to ask for a girl's C 584 hand he places a bundle of firewood and a small deer or other provision at her door; if on the following morning the woman lights the fire and prepares a meal with the food supplied, the proposal is considered accepted and the suitor repairs to the table. Some people hold that this is also a Mataco custom, but the facts which I have been able to glean about the matter do not confirm this.

The Chiriguano chiefs, however, have a privilege, which is that C 584 they cannot be rejected by the women of their choice: this is a great 622 stroke of luck for them. The chief reveals his inclination with the offering of a piece of meat or some other thing; the girl cooks it, and they then share both meal and bed. The chiefs, especially the

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generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, 422
have at least one wife in each camp.

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new C M
mother resting for only that length of time. 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simul- M
taneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then 595
a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will ac- [588]
knowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily ex- M
pert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the 844
patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always!

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making C M
they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The 832
fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them.

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among M
us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even 832

downcast and dejected. Faustino whispered to me: "Say a-aiss to her, with feeling." I said softly into her ear: "a-aiss," and the Indian beauty in spite of herself broke into an imperceptible smile for I had said to her: "You are very pretty!!" On another occasion I had gone to an encampment to witness the treatment given to an invalid by the Indian doctors; there was there also a young girl, the prettiest Indian girl I have as yet seen. 832

A lieutenant joined us and said to me out loud "What a good looking girl!" "Yes indeed" I replied. And the girl, back there in the shadows said: "Teniente toj tzi-la-taj" which means "the lieutenant is very handsome" -- but she said it in such a charming way, half ingenuous and half malicious, hiding her face behind the back of another person who was there and flashing at the same time such a meaningful glance that I really envied the handsome lieutenant.

Following is a transcription of a conversation between two young people: 521

He: "Who can that pretty one be whom I am liking so much?"
She: "Who can that good-looking one be whom I am loving so much?" (This is a sort of endearing refrain which they apparently use a great deal) -- Then, coming close to each other:
He: "Every time I see you I feel a desire to carry you off -- who knows but that some day you will lie in my arms."
She: Who knows -- as we walk we make progress."
He: "If you love me let me caress you."
She: "You must not do so even if you love me, for you belong to another."
He: "There is no one who can reproach me. I am single, and if I were not single I would not speak to you like this -- Goodbye! I am leaving tomorrow; I shall be absent for two years..."
She: "Oh...I am so sorry! I shall miss you if you leave..."
He: "Don't marry anyone else while I am away...I shall bring you a necklace, a kerchief to cover yourself, needles and thread... Goodbye!" [186]
She: "Goodbye...come back soon."

I refrain from transcribing the Mataco version for fear of boring the reader. But tell me if in this dialogue which I have here set down the same feelings and expressions cannot be found which are common with us.

At a wedding which is properly celebrated with all the attendant frills there are alcoholic beverages made from the pods of the algarrobo and vinal, and from forest honey -- regarding all of which I shall write in the following chapter. 273 [585]

Chapter VI

Fermented Beverages

Natural Products of Domestic Use

The algarrobo is to these parts what the chestnut tree is to Europe in its usefulness to the people who live in the region. By observation I have found that it grows in the area between one hundred and four hundred meters above sea level and between 30° and 15° of southern latitude, between the mountains and the sea. It does not like dampness, which keeps it from growing even in those places which would otherwise suit it. In dry, hot places I have come upon it even at an elevation of seven hundred meters above sea level, but always in flat country. 137

The algarrobo is found in various situations. Sometimes there are whole forests of this tree only; sometimes it grows in company with others. In my judgment it is the most widely distributed tree in the region and deserves, for this reason, and because of its great importance to have a whole area or forest zone named after it. It is to be found, in fact, growing both in forests rooted in earth built up out of the waters when these lands were raised, and in alluvial soil recently washed down.

The wood of the algarrobo is ideal for most construction purposes (except for roofing) and carpentry, but usually has the drawback of being short. There oozes from the trunk a black resin for which we have no use but the Indians do. The fruit is in the shape of a pod and contains a somewhat sweet flour which is used to make bread and fermented drinks. 137 824

There are in the region three types of algarrobo: the white kind which has pods in color and size similar to our white beans, from which a good beverage is made and the flour of which could be used. The black kind with pods like black eyed peas from which an inferior

drink is made; and the so-called [187] "patay" algarrobo whose pods, like our white beans, are thick and produce a large amount of excellent flour with which bread -- called patay in the Quechua language -- is made. The first two have simple compound leaves, that is, each leaf is made up of pairs of leaflets placed evenly along its axis, with small thorns at the base of each leaf. The third type of algarrobo has complex-compound leaves in which the secondary leaflets are subdivided into many pairs of almost microspoic ones, as occurs in the churqui (Acacia cavenia), and also has thorns between ten and fifteen centimeters long, though not large in girth.

In order to make patay (bread) which is only made in Santiago and Catamarca in the basin of the Pueblos de Belen, the dry algarrobo pod, ready for grinding, is placed under a hardwood or stone pestle which is moved by a long lever. The pod, thus ground, is turned into flour, but the seeds, which are extraordinarily hard, do not even break. The flour is then sifted, poured and pressed into a pot which has been previously heated by being put out in the sun or near a fire. The pot is now sealed off with fine sand and then again placed in the sun or near a fire for a short while. In ten minutes the patay is ready, for the warming has no other object than to melt the honey contained in the flour in order to make it coalesce into a lump, this lump becoming very hard once the honey cools. Thus they make loaves weighing from four to six pounds and more, which can be packed into saddlebags, slung over the saddle and afford a delicious if somewhat cloying food. The flour is in some ways similar to chestnut flour. A slice of this, impaled on a knife and heated in the fire is a really superb tidbit, both in smell and in taste. Aloja is the Argentine (1) name given to the fermented beverages of that region,

1. Cacan (?) Ed.

while in Quechua they are called chicha (2), in Mataco; hŭ-nă;

2. Chicha is made from corn. Ed. --
See: Acca and Asua. [?--Translabor]

in Mocovi: nă-ná and nánn-ná; and in Vilela: tsŭc-cuĕ.

In order to make this beverage, in Perū as well as among the savage Indians, the usual thing is to chew a part of the raw-material which is then mixed in with the rest. This smaller chewed portion acts as a leavening since saliva, as we know, contains diastase, found also in the cotyledons of seeds, which converts starches into glucose or grape sugar and so makes them soluble in water and fermentable, thus producing alcohol. The Indian knows nothing about all this but being as he is a keen observer he has discovered the effect of this chewing operation, so nauseous to the whites who see it practiced.

This same process was used in China in the making of [188] bread and in the East Indies in the preparation of fermented beverages. In our own midst, who is unaware of the custom indulged in by nurses and mothers of chewing the baby's food before giving it a spoonful of it? In spite of the lack of knowledge on the part of those who do this and of its foolishness and repulsiveness in the eyes of those who see it done, this custom has a very useful end, and science puts its seal upon it.

One often sees wooden and earthenware receptacles in the Indian dwellings into which people spit the pods which they have chewed during the day. In addition to this women and children, at certain hours, set to and break and chew pods, and the small children have a great time grabbing handfuls of pods in their fat little hands, cramming them into their mouths and spitting them over and over again into the pots. Often the grownups also gather there and then the preparation of aloja is an occasion for fun. The unchewed portion is ground in a mortar, which is always made of yuchan, a tree about which I shall make some comment later. The whole lot is then passed into a mortar made of a single trunk of that same tree and water is mixed into it immediately in quantity enough to make two or three barrels of aloja at a time.

Twelve hours later the aloja is ready. It has a bitter-sweet taste and is yellowish in color. Its sharp tang makes it pleasant to the palate. I prefer it in the Chaco to any other drink, including wine itself. Taken in quantity it inebriates, but the drunkenness soon passes and leaves no hangover. At least that is the way in which I have seen it affect others.

The season for the ripening of the algarrobo pods coincides with 824
that of the vinal, which is not so good in quality but which can be used

in making aloja. The chañar ripens before the other two mentioned above and is a sweetish, round, rather small yellow fruit with a stone, which is eaten either raw or cooked. From this fruit arrope is made, which is good tasting and has, in local opinion, medicinal qualities for the treatment of coughs and asthma. The chañar tree, while it is young, has leaves and trunk similar to the tamarind; the branches look like those of the eucalyptus. 824

Shortly after the algarrobo pods comes the mistol which is similar to our azufaifo except for this difference: from a mixture of its fruits with algarrobo pod flower, patay is made, and kept in skins and well kneaded. Together with these fruits, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later, all the other fruits ripen -- in the Chaco in the hottest months which are October and December (spring and summer months) and further south, towards Tucumán, in November and February.

Through certain techniques of preservation the Indians are able to prolong the yearly period during which they can feed on this vegetable diet, particularly if the crop has been a good one. The harvest lasts between four and five months and is a time of carnival for the Indians [189]. 251

To preserve the algarrobo pods they build small huts which they place on four posts in order to supply them with proper ventilation and to keep them free of ants and other insects. It is a pleasure to see these little constructions rising above the Indians' huts in the same manner as do our towers. Each camp takes pleasure in having more of these little granaries than do its neighbors. In the same manner do they keep vinal and some roots and fruits which can and should be cooked when dry. 343

When the aloja is ready, which is usually at eleven in the morning, all the men gather about the yuchan container, seated in the Moorish fashion. Then, with two or three long-handled dry gourds they dip out the liquid and pass it around to each other. Meanwhile they talk about their affairs: about wars, the crops, news, odd bits of scandal, and guffaw at any strange happening or quid pro quo. Thus they continue for three, four or more hours. When the liquor is finished they fall upon the solid matter remaining. The women and children take no part in any of this. 273 [521]

They set a high value on the algarrobo pod. A famous chief, whom the whites called Granadero (Grenadier guard -- Translator) 824

because he was so tall, and the Matacos called Quiatzutaj, which means Vilelón (large Vilela Indian--Translator), because of his national origin and size, when I asked him how things were going with him replied: "Well...I,...I rich...I having...much... algarrobo pods...I rich." They are miserly with these pods and with aloja, to the extent that they will not barter them except on very rare occasions. Only in a niggardly way and half heartedly will they invite anyone to share their aloja. 824 [556]

One morning I came upon a group of some forty Indians who were sitting around a yuchan of aloja. When I made my appearance and as soon as they recognized me they all began to shout: "John, John...yúc-cu-ás...yúc-cu-ás" (tobacco, tobacco), and I answered "hué-ni-tdé: niquiolá pac" (I have none, later I shall give you some). Only then did they invite me to drink with them and at my first refusal did not insist a second time, the chief saying to me -- "No my child...no...we...taking...you giving...tobacco." This was by way of politeness, in the Indian manner to be sure, but politeness nonetheless. I, to please them, made some effort to speak a few words to them in their own language and finally took my leave saying: "Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet...nutpinlá pac...niquioc-la yuc-cu-as..." (Goodbye, I am going home...I shall come back right away...I shall give tobacco). And all of them, full of pleasure because I spoke to them in their language and promised them tobacco shouted: "Amecná... amecná...tapil...ccaelitt (Goodbye, goodbye, come back soon). I returned after two or three hours with my pockets bursting with cut tobacco [190] and found all of them still drinking. As soon as they saw me they reminded me of my promise, which I thought they might have forgotten amidst the fumes of drunkenness. I distributed it to them and even when it was all gone they kept on asking me for more, upon which I turned my pockets inside out and shouted to them "namhuen, namhuen" (I have no more). They, satisfied with the eloquence of my demonstration, gave up their clamoring saying hée hée, which means "well, well"; but they forgot to offer me another drink of aloja. 123 574

While on the subject of greetings: these Indians have the custom of tapping the chest of their guests lightly and amicably with their half-closed fist, accompanying these caresses with expressions of good fellowship such as hée, hée, etc. -- (Good, good! etc.). 576

It is worth noting that although they are such tipplers, they do 264
not drink anything with their meals, not even water. On board ship
the Indian guests we entertained refused all beverages while they were
eating. After they had finished eating they preferred to drink water
by crouching beside the river and drinking out of one hand.

The Indians are great beggars and yet miserly with their own [609]
possessions where whites are concerned. This is understandable since
they are poor.

It occurs to me that I should mention something which, though 142
out of place here, I must set down for fear of forgetting it later: 145

The Indian boys, until they are eight or ten have disproportionately large bellies, so much so that they customarily bind them at the level of the navel. Later on they lose their bloated tummies and grow into well proportioned men.

It seems pertinent to me to say that the algarrobo belongs to 137
our family of the garrobas (Ceratonia silicua) and the botanists know
it under the name of Prosopis algarrobo. Its importance is immense
in the domestic economy of the savages and country people. It de-
serves close attention for this reason. The crown grows to some ten
meters in diameter but is not very dense, either because of the small
number of leaves or because of their shape, yet it affords quite a fair
amount of shade. The bark is very rough and is similar to that of the
grape vine.

The vinal (Prosopis ruscifolia) is a very small tree, yet boasts a sizeable crown. It is remarkable for its thorns which are from ten to fifteen centimeters long and sometimes a centimeter thick, and very dangerous if one gets a jab from them. The leaves, which are about the same size as acacia leaves but more pointed and somewhat rough, are said to be an effective remedy for eye ailments.

The scientific name for the chañar is Gurlioea decorticans; and of the mistol, Ziziphus mistol.

The fruit of all these trees are avidly devoured by all manner of beasts, and the algarrobo and vinal pods are the best possible fattening fodder for horses and cattle [191].

A type of fruit which is also to be found in a wild state, but in very limited quantity in my experience , is the plum. This fruit has a pleasant taste and is all the more appreciated for its scarcity.

During the aloja revels squabbles, fights and killings are frequent, and this not only among the Indians but among the Chaco whites also. 578

A couple of words now about the yuchan, also called palo borracho (drunken tree--Translator). It is a bombaceous tree whose scientific name is Chorisia insignis, and might well be called the cotton tree. It has a strange shape which justifies its vernacular name. The trunk is shaped like an oil jar, that is, narrow at its base, wide in the middle and narrow once more at the point where the crown forks. The trunk grows to a diameter of two meters and is covered with spiked bumps. At most it reaches a height of four or five meters and is often accompanied by a shoot growing at its base. The crown is at first made up of only two branches which later subdivide and form a wide crown of some eight, ten or more meters in diameter. The leaves are similar to those of the walnut but a little smaller and provide good shade. 137

From the bark, strips are cut which are used for tying bundles, as roofing material, to wrap and tie bunches of tobacco leaves and for any similar use. The Indians make their canoes from the trunk, all of a piece. In order to do this all they do is hollow it out with any old tool, since the wood is soft and easily worked when newly cut but later becomes harder than cork although spongy like it when dry. The Matacos use the name cuóu quiác for canoe, which in their tongue means "duck." 824 283 396

But the thing which is especially interesting about the yuchan is its fruit, which in size and shape is like a lemon. When it is ripe, which usually occurs between November and January, according to its location, the lemons split into four lobes and there appears a plume-like puff of cotton, white as snow, which little by little is carried away by the wind. 137

One of these open lemons is about the size of a fist, and each tree produces hundreds of them each year.

The Indians make a limited use of this cotton, but the whites do not, although I have seen in Catamarca, where the number of these trees is small, white cloth made from this material which won prizes at the Córdoba exhibition.

In the Chaco there is an immense number of yuchans which grow mixed in with other hard-wood trees. If this cotton could be

137

used industrially, the yuchan and the châguar (which has fiber serviceable in making rope) [192] as they are to be found over an enormous territory and grow without need of cultivation, would be of great commercial value.

Another interesting tree that has domestic use and may some day be employed industrially is the pacara (Enterolobium timboiva). It is a tree of great beauty, very tall, of large girth and having a great deal of foliage -- it is of the mimosa family. Its fruit is a flat, oblong, twisted pod of a dark chestnut color about an inch and a half long and which contains 12 percent to 15 percent of saponin. This pod is used [388] to get the grease out of clothes and wool.

To finish as we had started, I must add that the Indians are great 273 lovers of the alcoholic beverages common among the whites, and become so drunk as to be floored. Even in this detail are they like those who are not their brothers in Christ.

Chapter VII

Wars

The Indians are much addicted to wars, it must be confessed, 721 and they are perpetually fighting; it is -- if I may be allowed the expression -- a continual giving and taking.

One war follows another, either because the vanquished wish to avenge their previous losses or because the victors have begun to enjoy their victories. Causes for war are: having fished, hunted or harvested in foreign territory, or the need to annul an offence or the hope of gain.

These wars are not strategic ones in which one battle follows another until the enemy is helpless to defend himself; rather are they surprise attacks on camps with the object of overwhelming and pillaging them and carrying off cattle, boys and sometimes even women.

This is why the camps or villages, in forested regions, always 361 have flanks and back right up against the deep woods, where, if surprised, the inhabitants may find refuge, and where it would be impossible to pursue them as there is a veritable labyrinth of paths known only to the inhabitants of the village.

In order to gather together in a common place, in addition to the tracks they leave they twist branches and handsful of grass at crossroads in order that their companions may know where to find them, they having prearranged the meaning of the signs. 487 201

[193] Another means of communication is by making fires. During our traveling about the Chaco we were continually surrounded by fires, either at close quarters or far away, fires which sometimes took on the proportions of colossal blazes. And often, when we thought that we were in absolute solitude, it would happen that upon approaching an Indian village we would be informed that we were expected, and we would hear tell of the order which had been observed in our march. Dur-202

They make use, moreover, of many spies and informers. In Mataco the former are called niguaiecque, and the latter gu'éicáss. 701 [203]

They apparently do have some sort of tactical organization: thus they have a general chief, subordinate chief and petty chieftains. The first is called, in Mataco, canniat tizán, the second, canniat, and as for the last, I have forgotten.

The general chiefs are chosen at second remove, that is, from among the subordinate chiefs, who, in turn, are elected by the people. Normally a marked preference is shown for the late chief's sons, provided they be of age, courageous and good. But then, of course, we must say that in these elections the same passions are present which appear amongst us in our elections.

They also have another category of persons, whom they call nyát and corresponds vaguely to the Spanish "caballero" or the "galantuomo" of southern Italy. So it is that they refer to any white persons whom they consider of quality with the name nyát. It is to be supposed that a like distinction is made among the other Indians. In Peru and wherever the Quechua language is spoken, gentlemen are called Viracocha. [554] [609]

Once the general chief has been elected the subordinate elector chiefs go to call on him when they can, which visits are celebrated with the accustomed drinking and eating orgies. A general chieftainship almost always embraces villages far removed from each other.

The Matacos call those who visit them tzicki-ác.

The authorities among the Chaco Indians play an almost purely military role. In peace time they lose practically all their prestige,

although they retain their position of ministers of "foreign affairs," 701
representing the tribe before outsiders either to treat some matter, or to form an alliance for either war or peace. And even then their leadership is not of much value for the members of the tribe, the populace, are free to refuse to go to war -- although actually their pride only rarely allows them to hold back.

When a chief plans an attack he gets the advice of the old 721
men of the tribe and of other influential persons, and if these do not set their approval upon his plan he nevertheless invites those who will to follow him.

Sometimes, though, large scale invasions are planned by the allied chiefs of several villages. When we arrived at the village of Chaguaral, we found there a group of eleven or thirteen chiefs, all Matacos, who were awaiting the arrival of [194] their allies with whom, shortly thereafter, they invaded the territory of other Matacos who three months earlier had given them a good drubbing.

While they are on their way to wage war they vociferate 726
wildly, shouting both threateningly and happily. They dye part [302]
of their faces and bodies black and sometimes muss up their already unkempt hair until they look like "lost souls," in the opinion of a Christian Indian. On the eve of battle, those who have the wherewithal deck their hair, waist and ankles with feathers, preferring red or yellow ones, and tie any rag they may have with them tightly about their midriffs. When combat begins they break out with the most bloodcurdling yells.

This business of putting on warpaint is common to almost 000
all savages: it was the custom also among those whom the Romans called barbarians; for example, according to Claudius the Sigambrians used to dye their hair a brilliant red before going into battle.

The chiefs have the place of honour in the thickest of the 726
battle, which always results in the death of some of them. If the 622
invaders win, they sack everything, capture the women, the 727
children and cattle, parcel out the booty and set fire to the village.

They give no quarter to the warriors and only rarely do they 727
spare the lives of the older women because they distrust them as

spies or as bad teachers for the children they are carrying off. 727
The very old women are scorned as worthless. But the boys under ten or twelve are taken off and brought up as warriors and husbands for the strengthening of the tribe.

This custom ought not to appear more barbarous than that 680
which the Scythians, who lived between the Don and the Danube, used to practice, which was to cut the throats of all prisoners in order to avoid the trouble of guarding them while they lived out their nomadic lives. And what can we possibly say about this when the Romans, already Christian, hurled their prisoners into the circus, there to be killed by wild beasts and jeered at by the masses?

I make these comparisons merely by way of asserting that human beings are the same in all places and have been so in all periods of history.

With these harsh measures the danger and shame of slavery 727
is avoided, a thing which would anyway be incompatible with the nomadic life they lead, with their perpetual wars, even with the scarceness of food and finally with the independent character of the Indian himself who would prefer to kill or be killed rather than to be a slave. Nevertheless let the extraordinary influence be considered which such practices may have upon the existence and distribution of the tribes, for a series of victories gained by one tribe or by an alliance of tribes can bring about the complete destruction or disappearance of others.

[195] He who kills an enemy, if he has time to hack it off, carries away his scalp, together with hair, ears and even a strip of skin from the back part of the neck. This scalp is molded into the shape of a cup with the aid of a reed or flexible twig which is put in place and sewn around the edges. Right away, still dripping blood, it is filled with liquor and, grasped by the hair, is drained and passed around so that all may drink from it in honor of the victor and mockery of the vanquished. After having made several rounds in this way, the "cup" is grasped by the rim, liquor is poured over the hair until it comes streaming down and those present allow it to trickle off into their gaping mouths just for the fun of it.

I had, in my possession, one of these scalps which had belonged to a Toba chief who was killed by a Mataco friend when

that invasion took place which we had seen in preparation in the village of Chaguaral. Unfortunately moths got into it and ruined it, and I had no other recourse but to throw it out since it was no longer worth sending to Italy together with some skulls and other objects I had collected. 727

This custom of scalp taking is common to all the Indians hereabouts, and is also indulged in by those living in North America. The strange thing is that it was also practiced by the Scythians.

The Germans also were in the habit of drinking from the skulls of their fallen enemies. Who does not know about Albuin the Longobard who made his wife Rosamund drink from her father's skull some 1300 years ago? [171]

This Indian practice reminds me of something which, in my opinion, reflects the sagacity of these savages:

I was with the colonel of the regiment which was on duty on the frontier, on one of his periodic visits. Near a fort where an Indian tribe was camped the son of the general chief came to see him, (the chief himself did not make an appearance since he wished the colonel to call on him first) and made us a present of some very good and delicious aloja. As it happened that he had just returned from a raid upon the Tobas we asked him if he had not brought back a few scalps. The Indian, as though seeking an excuse for his cruelty said: "The Tobas take the scalps of white men and we take the scalps of the Tobas."

On this same occasion, seeing me dressed in the manner of country people, surrounded by army officers and standing beside the colonel who treated me with great consideration and respect, the Indians whispered among themselves: "Who do you suppose this one is?" And the more sophisticated answered "he must be some president or other!"

It seemed to me as I heard this idle chatter and banter that I was in the midst of a thickly crowded mass of our own lower classes.

[196] One of the superstitions among these Indians is to sally forth on their raiding expeditions with the new moon. They appear to attribute some magical virtue to it, yet they do not 721 82

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

they are killing our companions. Do not flee, face the enemy even if he stamps on your feet." 727

Second Indian -- "Oh, how I would have liked to be there! The trouble was that I did not see you when you were leaving..."

First Indian -- "You should have seen it! We just sailed into them with lance and club and in a short time had killed a multitude. Oh, we were really avenged there!

"Now I am truly happy: we are even. We scalped one of them, cut the hands off another, tore the heart out of a third, cut the...of another and decapitated many..."

And so he went on making a detailed description of all the acts of prowess performed.

I think that they must attribute some special virtue to the enemies' members. I remember that on one occasion I had in my possession three Mataco skulls picked up at a place where four years previously some forth of them who had been taken prisoners had been killed. The floods had carried off all the skulls except the three I was able to salvage.

I took these skulls with me to my hut which was at a distance of about ten leagues, on the frontier, and put them in my room under a small table which served as my desk.

One stormy night I heard a noise near the door which was open. The puny light given off by the tallow candle only made it more difficult to see and I could not make out the outlines of a black object which was moving about in the darkness of the room. "Who is it?" I shouted, reaching as one may well suppose under the circumstances for the revolver which was lying close by on the table. "Friend...friend...that's all...." and a Mataco chief came towards me with a companion. "What do you want friend?" I answered. "Toba etec" (the Tobas' head) he replied. I picked up one of the skulls and handed it to him, adding "Toba catchia" (bad Toba). The Indian grabbed the skull with his left hand, and as though possessed, started to claw at it and to stick his fingers into the eye-sockets and gaping mouth and then into his own mouth as though to suck them, all the while jumping about and shouting confusedly.

This chief had found out about the skulls but was under the impression that they were Toba, his mortal enemies, and had come

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during the night to celebrate the occasion.

It happened that the local Matacos returned about this time from the sugar harvest in the Salta plantations which were about seventy leagues from my camp, and it befell that every day, for some time, groups of Indians would station themselves at my door and ask me for a Toba head. I would let them have one, always repeating, as it were a refrain: "Toba catchia, catchia...." (bad, bad Toba), and they would go through the usual routine.

Chapter VIII

Religion

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The Chaco Indians have no God. I don't mean only that they do not conceive of God as a thinker or philosopher might but that they do not even conceive of one as do even untutored whites or Chinese.

[198] It is affirmed that the Pampas Indians do have a God, but this report must be considered as a recent importation and due to the continual contact of the Pampas with whites and with their brothers from over the mountains who were converted to Christianity shortly after the conquest.

But if the inhabitants of the Chaco do not know anything about God they nonetheless have their form of worship: the cult of spirits and of the stars.

I believe that there can be no doubt that the Chaco Indians are, generally speaking, as primitive as any of the world's other Indians and savages.

Now some philosopher-historians assure us that man's first religious stage is that of fetichism, which means the worship of fetiches, a word with which the Negroes of Africa signify the brute objects of their adoration.

Without denying that this may be or may have been the case where the Africans are concerned I nevertheless believe, at least regarding our Indians here, that the first stage in religion is not fetichism but spiritism of a sort which will later be described.

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, 771
Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians 123
regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard 771
and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs. 776

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a'hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a'hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or [753]
are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a'hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a'hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among 164
them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down 775
into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

consideration in proportion to what was his while he was alive and amongst his neighbors of his own village. This belief causes them to show great reverence for those of their number who have died. 775

Despite the a'hóts' inclination for wandering about, they yet ever remain in the vicinity of the place where the bodies to which they belonged died.

The soul of a person who dies in a foreign place and who has not been given burial in his home territory, is condemned to wander alone, despised and sad in the midst of the souls of strangers.

I asked my guide why it was that fortune was so cruel with those wretches who, through no fault of their own, died and left their bodies far from their native place; to which he answered: "The mere fact of these bodies having been left abandoned in a far off place by their companions and by the sons of the same tribe, was a sign that while they were alive they had not enjoyed the love and esteem of the others. The foreign a'hóts on seeing the soul of an outsider make an appearance amongst them reason in this way: 'if the person to whom this soul belonged was not honored by his companions or by the sons of his own tribe, nor given burial befitting a brother, then he was neither loved nor esteemed by his own people.' This being so, then they also shun him and leave him alone." I only repeat the rascal's words. 766

This reminds me of the veneration which the peoples of all nations accord to their burial grounds, and, in this matter of the souls of the unburied being condemned to wander, these Indians have the same beliefs as the ancient Romans according to what Virgil so beautifully expresses in the Aenead.

These beliefs are the basis of the ceremonies to cure the sick and to bury the dead.

But before entering upon their description I must call attention to a sort of star cult, especially amongst the women. These heavenly bodies are the moon and the morning star. 821 795

When the moon rises the women leave their huts and, holding hands, form a circle and begin to wheel rapidly, jumping and shouting in honor of the silvery moon.

They do the same thing when the morning star appears on the eastern horizon, and pray to it that the algarrobo pod crop and other wild fruits may be abundant.

At midnight also they sometimes break their sleep and men 795
[200] and women together form into a circle and jump and shout 821
in order to win the favor of heaven.

During lunar and solar eclipses they gather together to implore the cessation of the inexplicable phenomenon. Here, however, they have dealings with an a'hót whom they summon and fear.

These are the only acts of worship of which I have knowledge, and they show the inclination of these savages toward sabianism or the religion of stars; yet the sun does not play a part amongst the objects of their worship or of their summoning. According to Faustino the interpreter, they only get together to conjure up the sun's reappearance when it has been hidden behind clouds for a long time (an extremely rare occurrence in that region) or if a storm is coming up -- and even then it is not the sun but the a'hót itself which they conjure because they are being deprived of the light and warmth of the beneficial star.

One can therefore perceive that among these Indians also it is the women who start the worship process and who, as was the case amongst the ancient pagan nations, have found in the pale moon the element most suited to their condition and therefore more able and better disposed to protect them. The sun, on the other hand, so dissimilar from the temperament of womankind, seems to await the worship of men, but they are not so prone to be influenced by fears, hopes and prayers as are the women.

I have not seen idols in any of the places to which my MA
curiosity has guided me to search for them, and my guides have 778
always denied their existence. The Indians' outlook however does not seem to be one which would find the acceptance of idols difficult. In addition to that semi-worship of the heavenly bodies which has been alluded to it is probable that every object in nature having particular characteristics, be they terrifying or beneficial or mysterious, calls forth some response from the Indian which may be close to adoration.

Mr. Braly, an engineer who has traveled in that part of the Mo
Chaco in the vicinity of the Salado River, assures me that the 778
Mocoví Indians of those parts will not leave the place where the
Aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with
A terrible noise and blinding flash of light

aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with a terrible noise and blinding flash of light.

Whatever the case may actually be it would seem that the wandering life led by the wild tribes of the Chaco must needs exclude the possibility of idolatry.

How could a tribe continually on the move load itself down with the kitchen gardens required to grow the onions and garlic of the Egyptians? It seems logical that anything bulky and cumbersome would have to be eliminated. How could they worship gods who were loaded upon the rumps of horses, or other mean and vile places, or tied to ropes and whipped in order that they remain docile and not abandon the tribe while on the march?

[201] Or how could its prestige and terrible mystery be preserved amidst the pellmell confusion of constant relocation? And how could each one be thinking about his daily bread while on the march and also on the discredit on both gods and priests should they be made prisoners and destroyed by some enemy in ambush? Idolatry would therefore necessarily be directed toward small objects requiring little care; but these are the very last to draw worshipful attention and never actually do so unless they are a marginal part of a much larger religious context, sparks of the unsatiated caprice of common adoration such as the little intercessory saints kept in certain of our families for their private use.

Apart from this the notorious ease with which the Indians abandon their tribe, their chief and their witch doctors, together with the practically nonexistent prestige of the two latter except during wartime or when some danger threatens, confirms the preceding arguments.

Chapter IX

Religion (continued)

For these Indians God or the devil are one and the same 776
and they give them the same name which, as has already been

said, is a'hót among the Matacos. 776

This confusion frees them, at least in so far as language is concerned, from the vice of intolerance which is so strong with us. So it is that they call our church tohuó-hoto'hi which literally means: "that which contains the a'hóts," that is, "the a'hohi or Christian gods."

This is also the term for cemetery, in which they are in agreement with the inhabitants of those parts who use the word pantheon, which among the Greeks was reserved for demigods and with us for persons of great fame.

In the Chaco and in the whole northern part of the Argentine Republic where people are more democratic, egalitarian, ironical and also ingenuous, the term pantheon is used to denote a plot of cleared, grass covered land. This plot is quite open to access and allows free entrance to jaguars and dogs who go there to feast at the expense of the fresh corpse of a white, Negro or mulatto, but certainly not of a Greek demigod or of even a member of more modern divinity!

At this rate there will come a time when the word pantheon will sound offensive.

Not only are the a'hóts able to enter into people, bewitch 776
them, become incarnate (allow me the neologism) in them and in [202] elements of an evil nature such as storms, smallpox, famine, etc. but they are also able to wield daggers and even shoot with bows and arrows.

But it seems that they only indulge in this business of 791
shooting people with arrows when called upon by the witch doctors who, in Mataco, are called "háyagüé," and in Chiriguano, "ippaya." This seems also to be the case with the "gualicho" of the Araucano Indians, who in fact have a verb to express this action, which is "cúllin." The corresponding Mataco verb is "ioco."

It can readily be understood why the witch doctors have 411
chosen the arrow as the preferred weapon of the evil spirit, since 791
it is the only weapon in use among the Indians which lends itself to mystery and deceit because, as it is a projectile it can be loosed from any quarter and from afar, the bowman remaining hidden.

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The Indians have great faith in the power of their a'hót. One of my Indian guides, Tajo ["slash" --Translator] by name (so called because he had a scar on his face) in order to prove to me the indubitable power of the a'hóts, and the crass ignorance of the whites who deny their existence, told me the following:

"It happened that a tribe was returning from a sugar plantation in the province of Salta. It was the season of algarrobo pods and one night all the people were celebrating, singing and dancing. Suddenly they became aware of the approach of a white man who was singing -- they could hear the noise made by the horse's hooves and by the large silver spurs.

"As soon as he arrived at the place where the people were gathered he halted and began to scold them for what they were doing, wishing to put a stop to their activity. The people did not like the white man's interference and said to the hayagüe ["witch doctor"--Translator] that he make him go away. The hayagüe, unable to bring this about by peaceful means said to the white who was insisting on stopping and profaning the celebration:

"'Now you will see if we are useless people and how strong is the a'hót.' He bent down, covered himself and shouted to the a'hót: 'Strike the white man down with an arrow and make him see if it is true that we are worthless people.' 'It is well,' answered the a'hót.

"Immediately a sound was heard coming up from beneath the ground, like the snapping of a stick. It was an arrow which had struck home. The white man suddenly slumped from off his horse. He was dead. The a'hót had shot the arrow into him because the white man had not wanted to believe in the a'hót."

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The whole tribe swears to have witnessed the whole thing.

It is remarkable that the object, if not of worship then at least of recognition, be of an evil nature; for in the last analysis the a'hót is nothing [203] if not an evil power or one capable of evil. If we wish to consider such a recognition as the first glimmering of a religion, then we must confess that religion has as its base, fear of evil and the desire to command it.

This state of affairs which is found among all the Chaco Indians is present also in the other savage nations of America, though admittedly, there are some -- in North America for instance -- among whom the existence of other invisible and good powers or beings have been recognized, called "manitos" and "oquis" by some.

Regarding this problem the Americans reason rather naively, though with a certain amount of wit: "why should one worry," they say, "about a being who is by nature good? Surely we need fear no evil from him because if he is good he will not wish to harm anyone." A metaphysician would say the same thing.

It must be confessed that all religions are a little weak regarding this (for want of a better term) original sin; for all preach or impose expiatory sacrifices to placate the supreme being's wrath.

Among those Chaco Indians who still preserve some hazy tradition rooted in the missionaries' teachings, a certain ceremony prevails, possibly the only one of a religious nature, which parodies a Christian rite. From time to time they gather around their old men and chiefs, the women on one side, the men on the other. In the center, on a pile of flowers they place an a'hót, a child who is to be a witch doctor. While at these meetings they talk, smoke and drink, and then go their separate ways saying that they have "been at mass." The witch doctors keep up a constant conversation with the God Child (1), and report

1. This function of "Child Witch Doctor" may be an Indian custom because something similar to it is to be found amongst the other Chaco Indians. (Ed.)

back to the people what he says.

In this ceremony as in all others the wizard or witch doctor always bends forward, covers himself, directs his speech downwards toward the ground (beneath the surface of which are the a'hóts). He first speaks in his normal tone of voice and then answers himself in penetrating, muffled tones which he varies to suit the nature of the particular a'hót, and the people think

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that the a'hót is really answering, not realizing that it is a ventriloqual trick.

I have remarked a number of times in these notes that the witch doctors are the mediators between the a'hóts and men, but [756] they are also, in addition to this priestly function, doctors, -- in fact they are priests by reason of their being doctors.

The association of religion with medicine seems to be a constant factor among primitive peoples and also among the uneducated classes of the present civilization. This fact provides fuel for reflection of a philosophic-historical type. According to historians there is every indication that it was already present among the American peoples and even Oviedo mentions coming upon it [204] in the island of Hispaniola. Robertson, that sober and wise historian of America explains the phenomenon succinctly when he says: "Superstition in its primitive form had its roots in man's natural impatience to free himself from a present evil and did not grow out of fear of the evils which awaited him in the life to come. So it is that its origin stems from medicine and not from religion."

I have no indication that the superstition of these Indians goes together with any cruel practice, nor have I read anything to the effect that this is the case among the other American savages.

The luxury of cruelty seems to be the exclusive prerogative of religions, among them being those primitive ones of Perú and, especially, Mexico.

Chapter X

The Cult of Graves

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The Indians practice a "grave cult," and it can be asserted that they have always done so.

Near the city of Santiago del Estero I have seen their burial mounds and the earthen jars they contain.

Chaco Indians SX4

These mounds are to be found on the edge of a bluff overlooking the old bed of the present Dulce River. The rain's erosion and the excavations of men have uncovered a great number of these jars which come in various sizes. Some are sixty centimeters high by forty in width; some are crudely made, others shiny and decorated with intertwined strands and geometrical line designs. Into these jars the ashes or bones of the dead were placed. 764 172

The land downhill from these bluffs, which is separated from them by a slight rise, is overgrown with ancient algarrobos and other trees whose habitat is that of new alluvial soil, that is, alluvial soil washed down by rivers such as are drawn up by our present hydrography. On emerged or alluvial land of periods prior to the present one, which were caused by climatological and hydrographic conditions of a different nature, such, for example, as those of the glacial period, other types of plants flourish. This is a personal observation of mine of which I am absolutely positive and which has also been the subject of official reports.

There can be no doubt then that when these burial places were made the river ran at the foot of the bluff. And, water being the [205] first necessity of life sought after both by the savages and by civilized man the world over we may deduce -- in addition to the fact that a considerable period separates us from the time when the burial ground was in use -- that even at that time special care was taken of the dead.

In Calingasta, in the San Juan mountain range, sepulchers are to be found in the form of wells, covered by a slab but not lined since the ground there is very solid. Other objects have been placed beside the body, such as a kind of deer and, as far as I can make out, a dog. In one there was discovered a polished stone object having the shape of a rigid fan and which was doubtless a mirror. This was also the custom among the Etruscans, and I remember that in one of their graves, in Sabana de la Maremma in Tuscany, engineer V. Busatti found a silver mirror, which I saw, with a magnificent engraving which represented, if I am not mistaken, the sentencing of Paris.

In another part of San Juan near the Pie de Palo range, beside a pile of painted rocks (1) an Indian death room was found

1. Local term for petroglyphs. (Ed.)

Chaco Indians SX4
Chiriguano SF10

Cha 764 172

with many bodies in it.

In the mountains of Salta and in the highlands of Jujuy there are graves ("Huacas") in the shape of small vaulted stone ovens (2) similar to those used in that locality by the country

2. Also called "trojes" ["granaries"--Translator].

people. There are often as many as three bodies in these graves squatting on their haunches and wrapped or covered with clothes and sometimes having beside them pans containing objects of silver and gold. Nowadays the Christian Indians descended from those Indians who were under the sway of Perú and the Incas, hunt around among these graves and gather the bones so as to have masses said for them (so they say) but they almost always find that the greed of others has been there before them so that although they find the bones they rarely come upon the precious objects which were buried with them. One cannot say what kind of clothing they wore for as soon as the graves are uncovered contact with the air reduces all to dust.

The Chiriguanos of the Bolivian Chaco also place their dead in large pots or jars and bury them beneath the floor of their huts. Each house is thus a habitation for both the living and the dead and, be this either a cause or an effect, or both in combination, the fact is that the Chiriguanos are not nomadic. They paint the above mentioned jars with great care, the jars being of various types and variously decorated in accord with the wealth of the family concerned. The pots are fired and the glazing material, which is a sort of red, bad smelling tar, is applied either on [206] the unbaked or baked clay. If the former, the result is a more shiny, light colored finish, if the latter, then the end product is of a darker hue.

Chi 764

Chi [323]

On the lid of the buried jar a fire is kept going for a whole month, doubtless (if this report is true) to destroy the foul gases given off by the rotting body.

Those Chiriguanos who are poor and cannot afford these jars bury their dead in a trench inside the hut and then move away until the bad odor has ceased.

1: Pelleschi--108 C-5(ca.1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chiriguano SF10

The bodies of those who have been executed for repeated murder are flung out on the ground or else burned. C 766

Some Indians, among them the Chirionoses (1) who live on

1. Tribes of the Chiriguano type. (Ed.)

the Bolivian or Brazilian frontiers, bury their dead in the trunks of trees. To this end they go into the thickest parts of the forest, choose out a yuchan tree, which has a bottle shaped trunk and is as soft as cork, fell it and place the corpse inside it, covering it over well to keep the crows from getting at it. When the Fort Sarmiento road was opened up a short time ago one of these burial trees was found, quite by chance.

The Matacos make a practice of burying their dead under ground, although some tribes, those towards the east who live close to the Tobas, burn them. This practice, one would suppose, is one which they have in common with the Tobas. M 764

It is to be supposed that the beliefs held by the Matacos in this matter of interment are also held by the other wild Indians with whom they are continually in fighting contact, either as allies or as enemies, and with whom they share the same spirit cult.

Now the Matacos, as has been said, believe that the soul of the dead has no rest until the body has been buried within tribal territory. I have no reason to believe that an exception is made for those who die in battle. They believe also that the soul, which they call "hésék" (they give the name of "tzan" to the body, and "hót" to a corpse) does not descend into the earth to be with its companions until the body has decomposed, either by rot or by fire. They say that until this happens the soul wanders about around the family hut, sometimes becoming visible and complaining about its lot. M 775

This business of the appearance of souls (or ghosts) and their cries of lamentation is the subject of a great deal of foolish old wives' tales among them, almost to the point of their not talking about anything else, and I would wager that it is the cause of as much fright among them as it is amongst us. M [521]

[207] It follows that even when an individual has died outside his territory, his relatives and the members of his village will go and bring the corpse back to home ground for burial. But since transporting a corpse would be a very difficult matter for people who customarily get about on foot and who often have to travel hundreds of kilometers, they wait for such time to pass as will allow the corpse to lose its flesh, and then all they need to transport are the bones. This practice is in no way detrimental to the deceased for his soul cannot go under ground in any event until decomposition is finished. M 764

When death strikes, if it should be morning, then that very afternoon, and if it should be evening, then the very next morning, the corpse is placed in a grave. This grave is not filled in but is covered with branches so that the body may not supply a meal for jaguars, dogs or carrion eating birds. Once decomposition is over the remains are either burned, as has been said, or the grave is completely filled in and covered.

When a person dies far away from home, his body is wrapped in a net, in a squatting position, and then placed in a tree and covered so as to protect it from the above mentioned dangers; about a year later, or before if opportunity offers (but always when the bones are left) the relatives of the deceased return to pick up his remains and take them back to his hut where they are given the longed for burial. M 766

But wherever they may place the corpse they always put a pot full of water beside it. The reason for this is that just as soon as the individual dies the other departed ones gather round for a visit; and both they and he also might possibly become thirsty, and that is why he is given the wherewithal to slake their thirst. Anyone who knows the value which is placed on water in this region will understand why it seems important to the Indians to place some of this element at the disposal of the deceased, and will also be able to deduce that a bond of hospitality and fraternal feeling exists which continues even beyond the grave. Furthermore, our own pagan ancestors believed and practiced similar rites. M 764

As the Chaco Indians are poor and go about naked they cannot take advantage of the occasion of the death of their loved ones to show themselves off in expensive black clothing, as the whites M C 765

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do, or in white garments as do the Chinese; but they show in their own way that they are in mourning by shaving their heads which are the only parts of their bodies with covering. The women, instead of parading themselves about in their somber garb in churches and public places, hide themselves away in their huts and avoid all contact with their neighbors; they refrain absolutely from talking and apply themselves more diligently to their household duties. They continue in this mourning for a year, during which time it is not proper for them to remarry. Whenever they must needs go out they take the most secluded paths and if one should chance to meet them they cover their faces; they will not talk on any account and avoid any occasion for doing so. It happened that travelers [208] who have met up by chance, in out-of-the-way and therefore suspect places, with women like these who are withdrawn and will not speak, have mistreated and even killed them, being ignorant of the custom.

In addition to shaving their heads they also wail -- a monotonous expressionless chant -- which is apparently dictated by convention and accompanied by the beating of the "pin-pin" which, as I believe I have already said, is a mortar hollowed out of a tree trunk with a tool or with fire. Water is poured into this mortar and then a skin is stretched tightly over it to form a sort of drum. They beat upon this skin with a gourd filled with grains of corn or algarrobo seeds.

They wail in unison at certain stipulated hours, but the widow or mother does so without ceasing, even when she walks through the streets about her business. Relatives and friends accompany the deceased to the grave, and if he be a well loved chief or some famous witch doctor then the whole tribe will go.

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Chiefs and particularly famous witch doctors occupy positions of honor among the a'hot who await them, and their influence in the spirit world will be in proportion to the esteem in which they were held by their neighbors of which the funeral rites will be a yardstick. And so when one of them dies the Indians who are gathered about his bier beg him to bend every effort in their favor when he is far off among the a'hót, and try to influence the storm a'hot and the plague a'hot or the famine a'hot to pardon their villages and visit their enemies. The dying

C M 763 775 554 766 800

man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

M C 755 753 [756]

In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a'hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

M C 648 755

Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

Chaco Indians SI4

ignorant whites, in their turn, have a great deal of faith in the Indian witch doctors. C M 755 648

I know for a fact that rich ranchers have called Indians to come and treat them.

The witch doctors attempt to cure their patients by exorcising the a'hots by shouting, leaping, and blowing and spitting into the sick person's mouth. They prescribe, along with this exorcising activity, certain homeopathic remedies such as dieting, bathing and I believe massaging also. M 755

The faith which they place in their incantations does not wane even in the presence of white man's medicine.

It happened once while we were on board the river boat that the boat stuck fast in the mud. A number of Indians surrounded us and a group of them brought forward a sick Indian for us to cure. We did not have our interpreter with us on that occasion, but I was able to put my notes to some use and finally understood that the invalid had been bitten by a snake: -- "Chiasquietáj-Kĩa" -- "snake-bite remedy" was what they were saying. M 123 755

We had a small medicine chest and hurriedly applied ammonia to the bite. It was extremely important for us that the outcome of our ministrations be a positive one for we needed to gain prestige and also friends among the Indians, for relations were strained and some days previously we had been ambushed by a group of them who had then fired on us at point blank range.

Our patient, however, improved very slowly and there were times during the first three days -- a superstitiously critical period -- in which we had serious doubts of his recovering, because the swelling kept growing upwards towards the groin and belly and, if it had reached the area close to the heart all would have been over for him.

During this whole period of treatment -- which was carried on in a pretty rigorous fashion, [210] the situation hardly calling for ladies with kid gloves -- the patient took only water, as the witch doctors prescribed, and then, during the night while the crew slept, the doctors would begin to chant hũu hũu hũu... hée hẽe hée... hĩi hĩi hĩi... and then once more hũu hũu hũu, etc. Every now and again they would spit and blow like so many bellows upon the wound and other parts of the body, keeping this up for hours on end.

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I, who used to stay up very late, both to do my stint at guard duty and to take advantage of a few uninterrupted hours for study, used to take up a stand close to them. At first my presence there made them keep quiet, but later on, taking heart at my reiterated hiss tzilataj ("very pretty"), and seeing that I did not make fun of them, they continued in spite of my being there.

At last, after twenty days, the sick man got well.

One of the very strange treatments is the one which they administer to those who have been poisoned by a sting ray, which fish can administer an extremely painful and sometimes mortal wound. This treatment consists in placing the offended part, which is usually the ankle, over the smoke given off from the cracks in burning palo santo [lignum vital --Translator], which is a resinous wood, after which a woman in her menstruating period is to sit astride it. I have been assured by whites who have made the experiment that it is a very efficacious remedy.

Every treatment for sickness or wounds however needs, if it is to have any virtue, to be in the hands of a witch doctor (male), or at least in those of a female witch doctor.

Not everyone can be a witch doctor, and just as the members of this profession make their patients pay according to the seriousness of the malady and the means of the individual, either in skins, animals, food or other things, so also does this profession have its seamy side in which quarrels and deception occur. In addition to this and in order to get greater prestige they shroud themselves in mystery and the supernatural. So it is that in the village of Granadero the Indians, speaking about a young man who was already embarked on this career, said that as a boy he had vanished and then reappeared after two years which he had spent underground among the a'hot, these a'hot having carried him off in order to instruct him in the art and imbue him with the virtues of doctor and priest.

While on the subject of these frauds I must tell of an occasion when things almost took a bad turn for me. I went to call on Chief Granadero who was just recovering from a long illness. I had with me, as is my custom, a pocket inkwell and a pen. Granadero noticed these things and asked me what they were. I, thinking to please him flourished the inkwell and pen and set about writing, but saw in a moment that Granadero had become furious and menacing -- his doctors had just cured him of the a'hot which

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had been tormenting him for so long, and had extracted from his 755
body several pens and a pencil, under guise of which, they said, the a'hot had been harming him.

[211] The women seem to be extraordinarily able as mid- 844
wives. 759

With singular ability they wait for the critical moment of labor and then, raising and holding the mother-to-be they shake her and keep uttering their customary exorcisms until they are successful in their endeavors.

However, if one wishes to be in on an interesting spectacle 755
one must see an invalid getting the full treatment in a village.

One evening while I was camped near a tribe I became curious on hearing a great sound of voices and the repercussion of strong blows on the ground. As my relations with these Indians was of the very best I did not hesitate to go to see what was afoot. In the midst of the village, in a sort of central square, I saw a circle of black figures illuminated fitfully by the blaze of the fires; they were the squaws and men who were sitting on their heels smoking in silence. In the center of the circle, in a space of about eight meters, four robust men with ostrich feathers and timbrels at their ankles, wists, waists and on their heads were running back and forth, with their hands raised, gesticulating wildly and rattling some gourds half filled with seeds which added to the noise. They ran about singing and howling, and one could see that they were panting and covered with sweat. They would straighten out their legs and pound the ground with the whole sole of their feet, and as they did this they would raise their voices in a mad, desperate way, with their arms on high, heads to one side and body curved over.

Alternately two of them would stop, crouch, move their heads rapidly from right to left and up and down, howl and blow and spit on the backs, legs, heads and mouths of two invalids who were seated in their midst.

The two sick men were suffering terribly from the a'hots which had entered their bodies in the form of rheumatic pains, and the [753]
witch doctors were attempting to drive them out with their infernal dance. This, it was understood, they would be unable to do until they managed, by means of their unbridled racing about and thumping, to tire and intimidate the a'hots who, with evil intent

and at the very same time were dancing precisely the same dance underground immediately beneath them. The object of making so much noise was to intercept all communication with the sickness a'hots who were in the two men. The best doctor is the one who most jumps, howls and beats the earth with his feet.

The public who surrounded these goings on was there to give importance and greater virtue to the treatment, but the suspicion was in the air that the a'hot, on leaving the body of the possessed might take it into its mind to enter one of the other persons present.

This scene convinces me that: among the Indians, doctors earn their bread by the sweat of their... whole bodies; that among them also deceivers, by dint of much deceiving, finally [212] deceive themselves; and that the rabble was really convinced of the efficacy of the exorcisms.

And I was about to smile, moved by scorn and pity, but I remembered that c'etait tout comme chez nous [it was all much the same as it is with us--Translator] and... the smile died before it was born.

Chapter XII

Social Matters

These Indians do not differentiate the seasons of the year as we do, but rather by the several harvests: thus they speak of the season of algarrobo pod harvest, etc.

How could they even begin to divide the year into months or moons if they only count up to four? This very fact guarantees us a priori that they have not busied themselves with establishing the laws of the earth's or sun's movements.

In spite of this it is remarkable that they divide the day up into innumerable portions according to the position of the sun, which takes the place of our hours. They also differentiate between various constellations such as the Pleiades, Venus, the Milky Way, and Centaur.

And yet they do not have a word meaning "year." The Matacos use one, c-lúppe, which means period, and which has the same indeterminate meaning which that word has with us. Instead of "day," they say "sun" (i-qûa-la), and in place of "month,"

"moon" (i-que-lacq). In this they agree with the languages of all nations, a thing which is still preserved amongst us in poetic usage, while the common language of prose has undergone such changes with the passage of time that the words no longer appear to have their primitive material significance of sun and moon. M 805

Either by analogy from "moon" to "a light" or vice versa, the fact is that the word for both "moon" and "a light" is the same. M

This is not true of the word for "fire," for to this element special properties are attributed as the Chiriguanos condemn the bodies of those who die in the odor, or rather, taste, of evil, to be burned; and the Tobas and Matacos burn all bodies. This practice among the two latter nations is to be explained by their desire to hasten as much as possible the final condition which will benefit the deceased, that is, that as soon as the fleshy parts are consumed the soul will be able to descend into the earth and be among its companions. C 764

[213] Despite the fact that they are innocent of matches and sulfur, not to mention steel for striking fire, since they have no flint, they can produce fire at will. I have already described the manner in which they do this, by twirling one stick rapidly upon another which is lying on the ground until the sawdust which results -- which looks like finely powdered roasted coffee grounds -- begins to glow. Then they heap a kind of highly combustible wood onto it, blow it until a flame appears and from this they can make as large a fire as they wish. One of the two sticks which they use is from the chilca bush, which is aromatic, resinous and porous and is found in abundance throughout the Argentine Republic. M 372

It is customary to say that each Indian does everything for himself, and that this is the cause for his slowness and backwardness. But this is not so. They may be wanderers, but they do not for this reason refrain from a certain distribution of labor. There are amongst them weapon makers, canoe builders, net makers, weavers, etc., who sell their manufactured goods to their companions and receive others in exchange for them. They have, then, their guilds of arts and skills, but in an embryonic stage, of course. They also have particular terms to express themselves in this field, which in Mataco are formed from the word which indicates an object plus a particle indicative of function. Of these particles ›hi M 463 M 192 463

M indicates "possession" or "deposit"; gúu indicates "make," "maker";
192 kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something;
463 for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lúték; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-ʾhi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for
286 which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets
M which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their
[415] belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's
M opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They
[53] habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are
396 made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of
412 large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art,
323 but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this
M industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined
323 the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely
171 the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

Those pots which are used to contain water have an indented 482
waistline around which a rope may be passed when they need to be [445]
transported. This rope, running around the jar, is slipped over the carrier's forehead and the vessel is carried on his back, to which effect he must bend back and neck forward. This manner of transportation is no where near as graceful as that of carrying jars on the head as our country women do, and rather makes the Indian women look like beasts of burden -- however, it may well be a more hygienic way and is, in any case, more practical when traveling along half choked forest paths.

They have no knowledge of, and do not practice, agriculture; 241
yet they do sometimes plant corn (which, as is well known, originated in America) and also pumpkins. When they think it is time to go and eat the crop, they harvest it. They do not grind the corn, but boil it and the pumpkins also while they are yet green -- a harvest, then, is gathered in piece meal and lasts quite a long time. In order to sow they make use of a hard wood spade in the form of a small oar, or a large spear head; the husband makes a hole in the earth, his squaw throws in the seed, covers it, and that is all. The seed is sown in a recently burned off, damp field, that is, one which has just been rained on. 123

The crop is owned communally by all, but they are nigardly 609
with it concerning outsiders. While we were on the ship, most of our food having run out, we hungered for fresh provisions and vegetables, for we had been without them for more than three months. When the Indians made us a present of pumpkins and ears of corn we were more than delighted. These Indians were friendly, but later on their friendliness proved false for they killed our interpreter. The sailors managed to discover the location of the pumpkin patch and corn field and raided them by stealth. On the following day, when they returned to the cultivated plots they found that everything had been destroyed and not a single growing plant was left. We were never able to find even one of the Indians.

It seems, also, that the whites do not want the Indians to take 648
up agriculture. I was told that the white settlers once [215] came 241
upon a number of fields sown by friendly frontier Indians, and destroyed them so completely that the discouraged Indians had never again planted so much as a handbreadth of land. This action

stemmed from the desire which the whites have of keeping the Indians from settling and taking possession (a fact recognized by Argentine law) of the excellent land which the local whites look upon as legitimate prey for the future.

They do not indulge in commercial enterprises; and how could they possibly do so when they have no agriculture or industries, being only wanderers and nomads? However, they do practice barter on a small scale, which is their only form of primitive, embryonic commerce. They do not have words for "buying and selling," and in order to express this idea it would seem that they had gone to some of school of economics to learn the exchange formula do ut des; for, strangely enough the Matacos, for example, instead of saying "sell me" say atquiocq niquiocq, which means "give me I give you."

One can gather from this that they have no form of money; but they have invented a word to signify our coins, which is tdócq-kynat among the Matacos and which means hide or skin of metal. Kynat is a generic word which covers all metals which do not exist or circulate in the Chaco. It would appear from this that it is a word invented prior to the appearance of paper money.

Nevertheless there is a sort of medium of exchange, though in only an incipient stage, among the inhabitants of the Chaco. It is a substance which the Indians use to paint themselves with and which is highly valued by them even in the smallest amounts. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra the plant which produces it is called urucú. This paint is obtained by boiling the fruit of the urucú for twenty-four hours, when the coloring matter floats to the top and is collected and made into small pellets of varying sizes. The dye is exuded from the skin of the fruit, which is about the size of an orange. The fruit with a blackist skin produces a black dye, the one with yellow skin gives an orange or red dye and the fruit having a white skin produces a green dye. The skin on the yellow and white varieties is about as thick as the outer covering on a walnut. Each one of the three grows on a different kind of urucú, all of which are plants which grow to be about as tall as a man, with fruit about the size of a pomegranate which split open of their own accord when they are ripe.

Although this substance is produced and made in Bolivia, it is current among all the Chaco Indians and is used by them to

dye themselves red when they are courting, black when they wish 302
to appear dreadful, and green when celebrating some festivity. These colors come off very easily.

While on the subject of personal adornment, I must say that 304
these Indians, to a greater or lesser degree, are in the habit of 824
tattooing themselves. I have seen this carried to great lengths among some Toba warriors, and especially among the women. It looks something like the scars left by smallpox and is set out in geometric designs. They do it by puncturing the skin with a [216] large thorn coated with a caustic substance which looks like milk and which leaves an indelible mark and remains under the epidermis. This substance is to be found mainly in Bolivia in the region of Santa Cruz, and is called in Guaraní iguoqui. The same name is given to the plant from which it comes which is a vine which produces bunches of white flowers and elongated fruit which break open and expel a sort of dust. In order to obtain iguoqui they cut the bunches before they ripen, and from the stalk there exudes the milky sap used for tattooing. While the operation is in process they keep the portion of stalk submerged in water so that its milky contents will not well out and be lost. A Chiriguano Indian saw one of these vines twenty leagues downstream from the frontier with the whites on the Bermejo River in the place called La Luna Nueva.

A custom very similar in nature to tattooing in its object 302
is the plucking of hair which is a universal activity among the inhabitants of the Chaco and possibly among all the Indians of the New World.

The object of this is to appear better looking, but it is possible that the real cause has something to do with hygiene and comfort.

Maybe they want to set themselves off in this way from the other animals, which are covered with hair.

Meanwhile, either because they are naturally so or because of a gradual natural selection based on their depilatory habit, [142]
the fact is that the Indians are almost completely lacking in hair both on the body and face, and the little which does grow they pull out, with very few exceptions.

In spite of their language's being so complete I have been 535
unable to discover canticles or any similar musical effort. All

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I was able to come upon among the Matacos was this attempt at a poetic song, sung goodness only knows how, by the squaws. However, in spite of its failings it does reveal the use of rime:

[534]

Bonica nambonica
Se-le-ctie-no:
Bonica, bonica;
Nambonica, nambonica.

which means: I like, I do not like you to embrace me:
I like, I like, I do not like, I do not like.

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They have no dances; those violent gallopings about in a circle holding hands can hardly be called dancing. They are chaste, however, when they do dance, and if men and women happen to be at a dance together each sex forms its own separate circle, one within the other, but without touching.

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In a word, everything pertaining to the imagination, everything coming under the heading of religion, poetry or dance, can be said to be completely lacking among these savages.

[217] Chapter XIII

Social Matters (continued)

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But if they have no imagination are they not also heartless and insensitive? It has repeatedly been said and written that the bonds of kinship are not at all close and easily severed among the Indians; and this "fact" has apparently been picked up not from observation but by analogy based on the absence of the family and the existence of concubinage.

I am afraid that this is going too far. We are accustomed to and molded by our Christian tradition, which, by the way, is an exception to the immense majority of other cultural traditions, an exception which is paid for in part by pretense and infidelity, and the barefaced immorality which is prostitution.

It seems to us that if a woman is not joined to a man by all the sacraments of the church, and if she is not his only wife, then there results a shrivelling in all the finer feelings.

The opposite could well be demonstrated but in order not to stray from these my Indians, let me say that I have seen proof positive of conjugal love among polygamists.

We had on board an Indian with his young and beautiful partner, whom he loved and adored as though she were a representation of the Virgin.

In that business of the Indian who was bitten by a snake and whom we treated, his wife came to him immediately and cared for him for twenty days without ever leaving his side.

Chief Pascual, whose wife was captured and carried off in a surprise raid -- she being old and ugly --, organized an invasion, tracked down the attackers, fought like a lion and rescued his partner from the hands of the enemy. These are facts which happened in a short time while I was present in that area.

When an Indian puts in an appearance and asks for something, he never forgets his children, his wife or his relatives: when he receives anything capable of being divided up, he distributes it, not only to the above but also to his companions.

I have also noticed that mothers are always extraordinarily loving with their children; and have noted that the inter-tribal wars and the mass killings of the inhabitants of a given village are always motivated by the need to avenge offences offered against compatriots or relatives. And if this does not reflect loving concern, what does?

[218] They are cruel, but only regarding prisoners of war whom they condemn to death. We are hardly in a condition to judge them for this cruelty since we did ourselves do the very same until recently; put it into wholesale practice against the Indians themselves during the period of conquest, and continue to do so against them even now when we can do it with impunity.

Among the Indians this custom of killing prisoners is necessary for their personal security in the nomadic life they lead in which they are continually exposed to surprise attacks, and it furthermore frees them from the shame of slavery, an unknown phenomenon amongst them. (1) Looked at from another point

1. This does not agree with what is recounted about the Mbayas and other tribes, who, as report has it, have slaves. (Ed.)

of view this practice of no quarter for prisoners has far reaching effects upon racial distribution, for the victors, in either pitched battles or in contests of intelligence, take the place of and completely supplant the vanquished, thus carrying out that process of selection, which is basic to the Darwinian theory, and which is behind the gradual betterment of the racial strains in the whole organic kingdom, to which end all struggle for life may be reduced to the expression mors tua vita mea.

It has been said that the American Indians have been avenged of the conquest and of our introduction of smallpox by making a present to the Europeans of venereal disease.

I think that this is one of those assertions which are often made without sufficient proof, and which can easily be disproved. I have been told that qualified researchers have shown that this disease harks back to remote antiquity. Popular opinion (often wrong) has as a matter of course claimed it to be of French origin; and historians, in all seriousness, attribute it to the period in which Charles VIII invaded Italy. Whoever cares to accept this ought first to take a look at Chapter XV in the Book of Leviticus.

Actually, this disease is unknown among the Chaco Indians; or at least this was so until it was introduced by the white invaders. And although this could be explained by saying that a plague tends to disappear or to become attenuated after it has run its course and harvested those who had a predisposition for it -- which is the scientific theory held today by the new school of medicine and which in fact, so it seems to me, jibes with the Darwinian Theory of selection -- the facts are as I have reported them. What is more, in those localities where this disease exists the Indians are quite as prone to fall to it as are others, while African Negros seem either not to catch it or else to get it in a mild form. This is common knowledge among the gauchos of the plains [219] wherever the presence of these two races has made the observation of this fact possible. I set this down here in case it may be of use to those who have not observed it or who are ignorant of it.

These Indians are nomadic, as we know, and do not have domestic animals. The few they do have have come to them from us, and this exception merely substantiates the rule.

Even at the time of the initial conquest of these lands the white invaders were surprised at the lack of domestic animals among the Indians, and this not in one or two places but over the whole continent, a state of affairs such that it has attracted the attention of historians and philosophers, from Robertson to Humboldt, and from the latter to the most modest of travelers. 231

In point of fact nomadism has existed and still exists in Asia, nevertheless domestic animals were and are there much in evidence: the horse and the camel, for example. Have not the Lapps, the Samoyeds, and the Chukchee tamed the reindeer? And have the natives of the Kamchatka peninsula not tamed the dogs they hitch to their sleighs?

To what then are we to attribute this indubitable inferiority in the American nomad? Certainly not to the race's lack of ability -- an answer which might arise from a superficial and cursory acquaintance with them -- for if that were so then the Greenlanders ought not to have domestic animals, as the American Eskimo do not, despite being of the same stock and having the bison, similar to our ox and tamable, in their midst in the polar region.

Furthermore, the matter of domesticating animals which are tamable does not present any sort of problem requiring superior capabilities. Actually it cannot be denied that these nomads do have something similar to domestic animals, for the truth is that the Chaco Indians have always had and certainly have now either a tame ostrich [rhea--Translator], or a chuña, or a charata (woods chicken), and we know that the barkless dog was found to be in domesticity among them.

It is my opinion that the lack of domestic animals is due to three special circumstances existing on this continent and among its inhabitants. These circumstances are: physical conditions, social conditions, and the scarcity or complete lack of tamable animals.

It is well known that on this continent, owing to certain quite easily explainable physical causes, it is colder than it is in the old world at the same geographic latitude, which makes the temperate zone here much smaller than over there. For this reason it must have been much more difficult to care and get sufficient fodder for domestic animals up there among the inhabitants of North America where the bison is to be found.

Even had this difficulty not existed, the social organization 231
of the American nomads made the keeping of domesticated ani-
mals well nigh impossible. In [220] effect, and in spite of the
fact that one nation might occupy an immense area, yet it would
be divided into small tribes who owned sway over relatively small
territories and were (as their survivors still are) continually at war
amongst themselves. It follows from this that there was no
security, which is an indispensable condition for the raising of
animals and for any other peaceful occupation. Even at the
present time the Chaco Indians, although they are acquainted
with our domestic animals and do on occasion try to raise them,
do not do so on a worthwhile scale because the mere fact of their
possessing them is a temptation for their neighbors to invade and
despoil them. If social life had somehow got to the point of com-
pelling these Indians to gather into large groupings, then, given
the range of their vast territories and despite their being nomadic
and continually at war, it would always have been easy for them
to protect their animals, when invaded, by fencing them into
inclosures.

Can the Indians of these parts have been cannibals? This is 266
a question which always arises when we have dealings with savages
like these.

In America cannibalism has had adherents among "Hebrews
and Samaritans," among "Barbarians and Christians." The savage
Caribs and the cultured Mexicans topped off the very best dishes
of their cuisine with human flesh. The peaceful Peruvians used
not to disdain stews of human blood for their religious feast days,
in which they would knead corn bread with the blood taken from
the foreheads of babes -- what pious butchers were the gentle
and beautiful women devotees of that nation's religion.

In this region of the Chaco, although cannibalism may have
been practiced, temporibus illis, (which cannot be proved), at
the present time it is either non-existent or else must be con-
sidered reduced to its very lowest terms. 727

I shall say nothing about the custom of drinking aloja from 264
the scalp of a prisoner which has been converted into a propitiating
cup of vengeance and victory.

I have seen them drink avidly of the blood of cattle 262
slaughtered for our use, but they do not feed exclusively on cattle 272

blood or on that of other animals as some have reported; rather 262
do they make their principal diet of fish, game, and the roots 272
and fruits of the field with which, together with wild forest honey which is so abundant, they prepare the fermented beverages I have already spoken about.

He who spends any time among the Indians finds cause to 732
marvel at the lack of cripples or maimed people. From this fact certain travelers have gone on to affirm that the Indians, like latter day Spartans, kill off their malformed babies. This is also the opinion of some historians.

[221] I, on the other hand, although confirming the fact of their being no cripples by my own personal observation, explain the phenomenon by attributing it to the physical and social condition in which the Indians live. A more than free life, generally sufficient food (in spite of what may be said to the contrary); the nakedness of the women -- that is, their lack of tight garments about their waists and breasts; the healthful climate (for them at least), all are physical elements conducive to the great rarity of cases of deformity in the body structure of their babies.

Furthermore, the constant state of war, the frequent surprise attacks, the custom of giving no quarter, the wild beasts and reptiles, all conspire against the handicapped who are inferior in the indispensable faculties necessary in the struggle for existence. In addition to this it is probable that malformed children are not accorded the privilege granted their normal peers, that is, that their lives be spared by victorious enemies, and they be carried off to the latters' villages there to be raised as members of the kidnapers' group and thus contribute to its strength and progress.

All this then explains sufficiently the lack of deformed individuals without the need to attribute to the Indians the habit of killing newborn babies or allowing them to die. My personal experience allows me to set down a positive happening which *gives the lie to such a supposition.*

In the very center of the Chaco I came upon a deaf-mute Indian who must have been a little over thirty years of age. Really, if there is any defect which makes a man completely useless and deserving of being eliminated from society, this is it. However, it is true also that it is one of those imperfections

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which even in the most favorable physical circumstances can occur quite often among children who are the offspring of parents who are too closely consanguineous. Marriages of this type (between close relatives) are not rare here, and -- this is not just an extra trip bearing grist for my mill -- I have been assured that of the very small number of defective persons these latter, the deaf-mute, are the least rare among the Indians of these parts; among whom, let it be said, I have not seen a single cretin or cotudo [coto is a malignant swelling of the throat -- Translator] and that in spite of the fact that aberrants of this type abound in the north and western part of the Republic.

To come back to my deaf-mute: The occasion of my meeting him was brought about by his having been attacked by a tiger [jaguar--Translator] which mauled him horribly while he was gathering firewood. (This is one further proof as to the difficulty of putting up a successful struggle for life in these waste places if one is not in the full possession of all one's senses). We were called to treat the poor wretch, but he refused our ministrations energetically, preferring to put himself in the hands of the witch doctors.

Despite what I have stated above, the Indians themselves [847] have assured me that it sometimes [222] happens that a mother will allow her children to die if their father or any other man who will care for them dies or goes away.

However, this must happen only very seldom (and does 261 not weaken our argument regarding the handicapped) for among the inhabitants of a given village and particularly between relatives there exists a truly charming sharing of goods -- yet when food is scarce one may suppose that the phenomenon is more common. But such a state of food scarcity is probably felt less owing to the great variety of foods acceptable to the Indians and their really remarkable adaptability to the availability of food: they can live on a very skimpy diet when need arises, and then gorge themselves with a vengeance when they hit a time of plenty.

The elasticity of the stomachs of these savages is truly 261 extraordinary. When not on the march a mouthful of food is 147 enough for them; while fresh air, the exertions of the hunt, of fishing, of harvesting and of traveling in pursuit of these activities

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or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

1: Pelleschi--129 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1876 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter XIV

Social Conditions (continued)

Can it be true that these Indians wallow, as Gllerrazzi would say, in the baser aspects of love, and that they waste their dynamic and reproductive strength in abusing Venus, as has so often been said and written?

For the traveler who finds himself for the first time in the presence of these daughters of the forest in their natural state, the lack of any veil or covering to hide provocative curves is a strange phenomenon indeed, and he who has been the victim of a prolonged carnal fast may well consider this nude spectacle to be dangerous, even irresistible. But actually it is not and cannot be so in the ordinary state of events.

Habit puts a dampener on this sort of thing and quells the desire or stimulus of the senses which, furthermore, are bereft of the incitement of lustful refinements, unchaste caresses and irresistible flirtations. The senses, furthermore, are not excited by the undulating silk peplum, swinging electrifyingly, or by the tight-fitting buskins which show their wearers off to such good advantage; nor are they provoked by snugly molded waists, or filmy lace which reveals more than it covers, or by the supple glove which completes an elegant toilette, all of which, topped off with some brilliant necklace, awaken the dormant senses and tempt the sons of civilization.

This business of continually having women before one dressed in the manner of the Garden of Eden does not result in lasciviousness, rather it is a fact that the very humility of the savage woman's occupations, together with great freedom, tend to allay the manly appetites and guide them along socially acceptable channels.

Who does not know about the added attractiveness of forbidden fruit? Yet it is this very element which is lacking among these naive children of nature. Furthermore, how can carnal orgies take place in the midst of poverty and simplicity?

[224] Apart from this one must bear in mind that nothing which is destructive of man can be said to have originated in him, or to be permanent with him, for if this were so how could he have come to be and multiplied?

Thus, regarding those vices which are so often attributed ooo to savages, one must suppose that the person who reported them was deluded -- for it often happens that travelers deceive themselves and allow their preconceived notions to color a situation which is so different from the one in which they were brought up -- or else that they are vices introduced by contact with other societies and really foreign to the basic nature of the savages' life.

[At this point, the beginning of the third paragraph on page 224, the text is repeated and continues so up to the end of the first paragraph on page 226. This section is identical to that between page 218, beginning of paragraph three and page 220, end of paragraph one--Translator].

[226, second paragraph] The scarcity of tamable animals has been conducive to the absolute lack of domesticated ones, and this has, in turn, tended to undercut the movement towards larger social groupings. This paucity of domesticated animals is notorious and we have an excellent example of it among the Peruvians who, despite having a well organized religion, government, and agrarian institutions, still had only domesticated, among the larger animals, the llama, which latter, because of its shape and endurance may well be called the camel of the Andes. And the Mexicans too, in spite of being settled and, let it be said, civilized, as were also the Bogotanos, still had no other domestic animals than those which we would call "lesser barnyard animals," such as rabbits and a few fowls -- and this came about because there were no other tamable animals.

It is a fact that even the Peruvians who had domesticated the llama, making use of its meat and wool and using it as a beast of burden, as is still done in Bolivia (1), had to be satisfied

> 1. The llama as a pack animal can only carry four "arrobas" [one "arroba" = 25 pounds--Translator], that is 45 kilograms; while a mule is able to carry loads of twelve arrobas, which is 135 kilograms.

with allowing the vicuña, whose wool was then, as now, much sought after, to continue in its wild state because it is an animal

which is very hard to tame. They used to hunt the vicuña during 680
certain fixed seasons, a multitude of people gathering together for this purpose by order of the Inca and enclosing in a wide circle a large tract of mountainous countryside. This enclosure was sealed off with a rope hung with strips of cloth and attached to stakes. The Indians would then rush toward the trapped vicuñas and herd them into a small area, the single, puny strand of rope over which they could easily jump being sufficient to hold them. Then the herders would close in ever more tightly until the large numbers of animals were so compactly crowded together, being hemmed in by precipices on one hand and the ropes on the other, that they could be easily captured. This type of vicuña hunt was limited to a different area each year and so extinction of the animal was avoided. The same sort of thing is done nowadays in the Mojo territory and although the limitation to certain regions is not adhered to the animals do not appear to be greatly reduced in number.

This example assures us that if they had had other animals in that area which were amenable to domestication, the Indians would have made use of them; and by analogy it shows us that wherever we find that animals are not domesticated the reason is that no tamable animals, or very few of them, are to be encountered, which is actually, as we know, what has happened.

[227] Be that as it may, it is apparent that the transition of the inhabitants on this continent from a nomadic, savage life to the sedentary life of agriculture must have been abrupt indeed; while in the old world there was, and is still, an intermediate state between the purely nomadic and the agricultural state which is the nomadic combined with the pastoral.

This lack of an intermediate state is to be explained fully enough, it seems to me, by the absence of tamable and, therefore, tamed animals. From this, in my opinion, it would be a mistaken conclusion for anyone, finding himself suddenly in the presence of agricultural nations such as those of Peru, Mexico and Bogota, which are surrounded by other nations still in a savage state, to attempt to explain this anomaly by regarding it as comparable to the type of evolution undergone by Asiatic nations, in which sudden changes were introduced by conquest

from without. The fact is rather to be explained by the natural causes already mentioned -- and as far as Peru is concerned, I believe I can state from personal knowledge that the language spoken there, which was the official one in the time of the Incas, is related to the language used by the savages.

If we eliminate this sort of Deus ex maquina, that is, a supposed invasion or immigration of nations from the old continent to the region occupied by the above mentioned tribes, this question is raised: to what causes must one attribute the civilizations of Peru and Mexico? In these countries there could be found institutions which in some cases might be considered as copied from the old continent, such as: the Cult of Stars, Gods, Temples, Priests, Monks, Castes. In Mexico we have a calendar, which Humboldt thought to be similar to the Egyptian; in Cuzco, the capital of Peru, a period of years almost identical to that of the Hebrews; there also the quipu or cord for keeping count (used on occasion in China); a pedagogical [sic] government; periodic distribution of land; a matching up of young people of marriageable age made publicly by the Inca, which reminds us of the pedagogical governments and the agrarian laws over the whole of the old continent; the Hebrew jubilee, the nuptial customs of the Assyrians. . . .

This is a query which every thinking man asks himself but which is not to be answered lightly. Some historians of note say the following: In the regions occupied by these empires there reigns a climate which is benign but also enervating, and the peoples gathered there lent themselves more easily to the discipline involved in leading a civilized life. A conquering man or nation could overcome them and impose a despotic rule, which could be ferociously cruel (as in Mexico), or paternalistic (as in Cuzco), but in any case always frightful. Human intelligence -- and human it is [228] wherever it may be -- developed there in the same manner as in other places, and gave rise to civilizations and situations analagous with those on the old continent.

I do not agree at all with this opinion, especially with the first part. I regret that I am not familiar with the physical conditions of Mexico, but I know the conditions in the greater part of the Inca region and there I have found the natural explanation which the facts yield.

Necessity was the underlying cause in this empire, and not the enervation of its inhabitants.

In all of Peru, on all the western slope of the Andes, on almost all of the eastern slope and in Bolivia, neither man nor any other animal can live without agriculture, which cannot itself exist without irrigation.

Here are two causes which oblige man to give up wandering, come together in groups, and therefore hold himself in check, settle down and develop for himself, successively, arts, discipline, religion, government. Despotism of itself explains nothing, but both warlike and peace-loving nations have had to endire it in the past, endure it now, and will endure it in the future, and yet this in no way makes them inferior to nations who have enjoyed freedom. On the contrary, in the Chaco, in the Pampa, in Brasil and in North America, the soil supplies fruits and roots, quadrupeds and birds freely and spontaneously, while the rivers and lakes contain an abundant supply of fish. This is the reason behind the lack of unity and settling upon the soil: for here are nations who would probably prefer to be destroyed by invaders (whom necessity forced into civilization and the procurement of weapons of offense) rather than willingly submit to the slavery of work which they do not need. And nevertheless, for the greater part these regions have a benign and often enervating climate, more so than in Peru, Bolivia and Mexico.

Now, let us suppose that either because of war or because of the need to expand and spread out (the two most important causes for mass migration) a new race occupied the area of Peru shortly after growing in number beyond the limits imposed by the strictly limited resources of that poverty stricken land. It would, out of very necessity, have to wrest from the soil by dint of hard labor that sustenance which it lacked and which could not be obtained from other more fertile regions because these were inhabited by more numerous, happy and stronger enemies.

This genesis seems so true and obvious to me, that I feel that if the historians had realized what the innate physical conditions of these regions were, they would not have been able to come to any other possible conclusion. I am almost certain that even Mexico cannot boast of such a climate or such a degree of soil fertility as not to require labor of an agricultural type in order to produce enough for the sustenance of its inhabitants.

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[229] The analogies in both institutions and customs which can be drawn between the new and the old continents do not by any means amount to positive proof that such institutions and customs were introduced by invaders from the old world, since such invasions hark back dozens of centuries into the remote past; yet certain details constrain us to refrain from discounting the possibility that certain individuals may have been cast up on these shores by the fury of the ocean, remained here and introduced new influences. It is my opinion that these analogies may well be for the most part the result of natural human intelligence, the harmony and homogeniety of which would thus be clearly manifested across both time and space.

On the other hand, if we overrule the above explanation and prefer to accept a material union -- or even a prehistoric connection prior to all human rememberance -- between the two worlds, then we must of necessity recognize and declare the tremendous inferiority of the Americans.

This inferiority -- supposing it exists -- was either original in the race of mankind which came to settle here or else resulted from the physical conditions of this continent; an inferiority, let it be said, which has been found throughout the animal kingdom in the Americas.

The solution of this most important problem, the major problem facing humanity, is reserved for the physical and natural sciences, and also to the not much loved science of philology.

[Translator's Note - [This "translator's note" is one included in the text by the first translator who rendered the original Italian version into Spanish--Translator]. On sending this translation to Mr. Pelleschi for correction and approval, I asked his pardon for certain omissions which I had made and which appeared in the original text. These omissions had to do with certain matters which had a legitimate place in the author's travel notes but which were not of a nature to be included in a publication such as this.

The author, with characteristic good will, acceded to my petition, but pointed out that the final result was lacking somewhat in continuity. I therefore beg the author's pardon and ask the reader to bear this in mind should he come upon some gap.

As for the rest Mr. Pelleschi and I are in complete accord: neither are all good things to be found in our civilization nor all bad ones among the savages of the forest. God grant that we not fall into the mistake of saying that that civilization which is in contact with the poor Chaco Indians is Christian, except for a few shining exceptions!

One should read what the Dominican Father Domingo de S. Thomas wrote about these things in 1570, in Chapter XXIII of his "Gramática Quichua" ["Quichua Grammar"--Translator].

[230] "Since we Christians came to this land, the Indians have taken up our manner of swearing, and there are even some who think (to their detriment) that to be a good swearer is tantamount to being a good Christian; and it is a fact that the following episode is true, and I can vouch for it as I was directly concerned: I once asked a chief, in a certain province, if he were a Christian, and he answered me that he was not yet fully a Christian but was only beginning to be one. When I asked him what he knew that was Christian he said "I can already swear using God's name, and play a little at cards and I am beginning to be adept at thieving." From which I gathered that that sinner must think that since a tailor is a tailor because of his occupation or actions, which is to sew, and those who pursue other skills are to be recognized by what they do, so also must it be in this matter of being a Christian -- in order to be one one must do what Christians seem naturally to do."

Pilcias, January 1, 1897]

[231] PART TWO

An attempt to compile a grammar of the Mataco tongue. [2]

I

Origin of this section of the work.

In honor of Juan María Gutiérrez

While we were awaiting the assistance for which we had asked, and which would probably be some time coming, I thought that I could best use all the leisure time which was being forced upon me, by attempting to gather words from the surrounding Indians.

I had heard on repeated occasions that these savages had only an impoverished language with scant words and forms. Because of what I had read (which admittedly was not much) in the field of philology, I was persuaded that the very opposite was probably closer to the truth, and I wished to make some personal observations in order to arrive at a more solid opinion on the subject and then communicate my findings to others. Just before leaving Buenos Aires I had had a conversation with Doctor Juan María Gutiérrez, and he had said the following to me:

"If you have time, take up and study the language of these savages. Because of the complete lack of traditions and of archeological data regarding these Indians, the discipline of linguistics is called to play an important part in the discovery of their origin, or at least of their correlation -- if such exists -- with other peoples in the remote past; remote, that is, when compared with the present known history of man. Apart from this, linguistics is fast becoming a science, and given time will most certainly surprise us with the splendid results which it will achieve in outlining the history of humanity."

To which he added by way of encouragement: [232]

"The field of linguistics is still for the greater part virgin and therefore promises an abundant harvest to anyone who cultivates it -- take advantage of this opportunity, for you will not be wasting your time."

How could I possibly lend a deaf ear to such expert advice? Even though I might not be equipped to contribute more than an insignificant pebble to the linguistic pyramid, I yet felt stimulated by his words, and to a certain extent committed. Later, while I cudgeled my brain in an effort to untangle and isolate some rule from that mass of words which I had been able to collect, I would every now and then be successful and the resultant feeling of delight in accomplishment would be augmented by the anticipation of the further delight which would be mine when I returned to Buenos Aires and presented my findings to Gutiérrez and talked at length with him.

He was a man of great natural talent which had been magnified by deep erudition. Love of the arts and sciences was uppermost in his life. His tolerance was proportional to his vast knowledge and his free way of thinking. He was affable in manner, which was fitting to one who owed everything to his own efforts and who had experienced all of life's vicisitudes. At seventy and in his lofty literary and administrative position he knew how to inspire, even if with just a word, the most modest student, and to listen to and discuss with the most cordial deference the problems of the least of those who visited him, which is not such a common thing among men of his age and knowledge.

But the pleasure of speaking to him again was to be denied me. On my return the news which caught my attention in the first newspaper which I bought after landing was that of his death, which had occurred on the eve of my arrival!

May your memory, oh Gutiérrez, remain ever as alive and lasting in the hearts of your countrymen as it is in the heart of the author of these lines, who will preserve it in all its freshness! Be pleased to accept as dedicated to you, and protect with your name, the few paltry lines which I may write in the following pages on the subject of the Indian languages -- for it is to you that I owe them, and without you as patron I would not have dared to publish them!

II

Beginnings of the work. Particulars of a personal nature.

At the beginning of my labors I had but little hope of crowning my efforts with any success. We had on board with us an Indian

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who claimed to be a Mataco, [233] and whom I immediately 124
pressed into service by asking him the names of the different garments we were wearing and the objects which surrounded us. But the man would soon tire after I had asked him just a few words. It was evident that intellectual exertions, be they ever so light, were not for him. Whenever I would ask him the same word twice he would give me to understand that he had already told me and, picking up my notebook, would turn the few written pages it contained and find the right one and point out the general area in which the word alluded to was to be found. And yet I could have sworn that he was looking in some other direction while I was writing! When it is mentioned amongst us that someone is "acting the part of an Indian" -- in the sense that he is pretending to be unaware of what is going on -- a very great truth is affirmed.

With all this I was able to advance little or nothing in my 124
work.

But when a few days later we were harangued by the Toba chief, who seemed to be barking rather than talking, then I became absolutely convinced that I must keep to my own field of knowledge and not wander innocently into others, so useless did it seem to me even to attempt to make any sense out of those barks.

Man, however, proposes and circumstance disposes. A few days later we ran aground, and as we were unable to continue on our way I had ample spare time at my disposal to make use of as I saw fit. The Indians milled about on the land beside the ship. Many chiefs came to see us and we could not understand a word of what they said to us... here then was my opportunity, and I made ready to take full advantage of it.

The Indian is distrustful by nature and does not want out- 115
siders to learn his language, but among them was one Faustino, 124
a Christian [Text unclear as to whether this man was a "Christian Indian" who had given up his religion and returned to his own people, or a "Christian white" who had taken up with the Indians -- Translator.] who had gone over to them, and I, by stealth and without the Indians' knowing it, began to question him. However, I did not find this at all satisfactory, finding so much apparent

confusion in the words when they were strung into sentences and 115
attributing the difficulty to Faustino's little understanding of the 124
matter in hand. At last we were able to establish more friendly relations with the Indians by dint of our frank and open treatment, my continual and almost reverential repetition of their words as though they were precious things whenever an opportunity offered and, finally by the judicious distribution of a few gifts all of which, in combination, made them lose their wariness; especially in the case of the younger ones who then outdid themselves in telling me, of their own volition, the name of every object I cared to ask about.

But it was really strange: a word, when repeated, would 124
change and be different for no apparent reason. At times its vowel sounds would seem separate, at others dipthonged, to the extent that if one of the two component sounds were stressed more than the other, neither one would agree. Often the change was in the syllable itself, so to speak, while on occasion there would be either a gain or a loss of a syllable. [Original version garbled--Translator] [115]

One morning we made a test with Natalio Roldán. We spent a quarter of an hour establishing between us which was the true [234] sound which was to be reproduced with Spanish signs, and whether it was this sound or some other which had come through in a given word. This vagueness and lack of certainty confirmed Roldán in his opinion that the Mataco language was an enigma which could not be transcribed, was devoid of rules, and could not be learned, as the Missionary Fathers (who were established in Christian territory near the frontier) themselves had affirmed.

My ear, however, becoming accustomed to these new sounds, brought me slowly to the realization that the Mataco tongue was not after all that wild, untamable mustang which people would have one believe. This I realized while only as yet being able to isolate the sounds, for I could not at that time comprehend the reasons behind certain syllabic changes.

I decided to take a new tack and avoid all pretentious arguments on the subject, channelling my efforts into accumulating sentences, examining and comparing them later in order to be

able to extract a few rules from them after having written them 124
down as it seemed to me that they sounded.

One day the son of a chief stopped by and I began to ask 124
him the names of all the parts of his body. Naked as he was there 193
was no possibility of confusing these parts of the body with the clothing associated with them.

Hardly had he finished when I perceived that each one of those fifteen or twenty words began, without exception, with nu or no, the u and the o substituting each other frequently, the difference in sound being hardly perceptible.

"Well I'll be...!" I said to myself. This nu is either an article or a relating particle, for it is not conceivable that so many words have the same root. It didn't seem likely to me that it was an article, but nevertheless I remembered that when I was a boy and I was asked by someone to name the parts of my face I used to answer using the article, and saying -- for example: "the mouth, the eye," etc. Why could these Indians not be just as childish as I?

I very soon had my doubts resolved. I asked him the same questions with reference to my own body, and he repeated the words he had given me, but changing the nu to a, and sometimes a few of the other letters which followed after the nu. It was as though a bolt of lightning had suddenly illumined my understanding -- but doubt returning, and being very desirous to get to the bottom of this problem, I took advantage of the occasion of my having caught a chimango [kite-like bird--Translator] and asked the same questions about the various parts of its body. In the answers I was given, many of the words began with lu or lo, but remained otherwise pretty much the same as those pertaining to man, minus that famous nu or a.

The following conclusion, almost concrete and tangible in 193
its clarity, flashed before me: So the Matacos prefix a variable particle to their radical words, and this particle probably expresses a relationship. But what relationship?...I searched again through my notes, especially among the phrases and sentences and found that on every occasion when reference was made to the person who was talking the term began [235] with nu; if reference was to the person spoken to, with a, and if to a third person, then with lu or lo.

It was a revelation to me. It was a key which opened up 193
for me the secret of a large stage upon which were to be found the explanations of the meaning of a great number of words; it was the compass which allowed me to find the right way as I traversed the labyrinth of phrases.

What a pleasurable experience that was!

These particles are not prefixed only to nouns, but also to verbs, and to adjectives when need arises. They even go so far as to overuse them pleonastically, as we so often do with certain particles in relaxed conversation; a phenomenon which is even more pronounced in untutored usage.

Following hard upon this discovery and attempting to find out something further regarding the way these particles were used, I came upon something which confirmed my previous induction: nu is a syncopation of nuj-ca, which means "mine"; a is a syncopation of aj-ca, meaning "yours"; and lu is a shortened form of luj-co, meaning "his," "of him." This is when these particles are prefixed to nouns. When prefixed to verbs they may be considered, respectively, as syncopations of noj-c-lam, signifying "I"; am or ham, meaning "you"; and lutzi or toj-lutzi, meaning "he" or "that one." With verbs, toj is preferred to lu, and means "this one" when isolated, while toj-sam and toj-lani mean "that one," and toj-licne and toj-lei-tzi mean "that one yonder."

Is this inter-compatibility between personal pronoun, personal adjective and particle indicating personal relation not beautiful and at the same time simple and useful?

Was it possible that such a language could have lacked rules? All this built up my interest and egged me on to further efforts.

Accustomed as we are in our language to find, as a general rule, the root and the unchangeable part of words at the beginning, the finding of the very opposite here was enough to drive one mad until some canon could be found which would explain matters. This being so, the following rule of thumb ought always to be followed when attempting to study a language which does not have a written grammar: forget every rule which holds for one's own language -- if this is not done it will be as difficult to hit upon the right solution as it is to recognize a person who is wearing a mask.

1:Pelleschi--142 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7

III

Phonology

a. Confusion between K. I. Ch, etc.

Among the Matacos sound shifts such as the following are very frequent: quia, quie, quii, quio, quiu to tzá, tzé, tzí, tzó, tzú and to chiá, chié, chií, [236] chió, chiú, and vice versa. Also quiá, etc. to tiá, tié, etc. So it is that we can use any one of the following words for "sheep": tzonataj, quionataj, chionataj, and either huenquié or huentié for "little bird." However, the general use of one of these sounds in preference to another marks off one dialect from another. So it is that the Matacos who live adjacent to the Tobas use tzá, tzé, etc. while those who live near the white settled area use chiá, chié, and so forth.

This linguistic wanderings, may we call them so, are easily understood if one takes great care and if they concern polysyllabic or even bisyllabic words, but when they are found in conjunction with words of only one syllable they are extraordinarily confusing. For example: who could have guessed that tzac-da in one dialect was the same as quiaj or quioj in another?

Withal, it is no less strange and curious than certain phonetic shifts which are instinctive, if we may use this term, with man in general, and which are to be found also amongst us Europeans. For example, in Milan they say chiesa and not quiesa, and the Spaniards say cuchara instead of cuquiara or cuquiaya as in Italian, and so with many other words: squiachare and stiachare (1) to

1. In Italian these words are written schiacciare and stiacciare.

squash. So it is that of the Indians of Quichua leanings, those living in the areas surrounding Santiago often use na while the Collas or inhabitants of Bolivia use na. Example: na instead of ña, meaning "already," and nojca for ñojca meaning "I." The same thing occurs in Italian, in Portuguese and in Spanish, for

example: nina for niña and farina instead of fariña, and so forth.

And what shall we say of the inversion of letters and syllables? How often does it not happen that on speaking rapidly a word becomes changed because of a change in the order of syllables? Now this is a real instinct which is inherent in language generally, which results in certain sounds in one tongue sounding wrong to a person speaking another sister tongue. Thus the Italian cantilena reappears as cantinela in Spanish, and also guirlanda as guirnalda, and birbone as bribon -- the vir bonus (!) of Latin, and so forth.

And these Matacos also on occasion interchange the order of syllables in their words, for instance: in their way of speaking melon becomes nelom, and so also with other words.

b. Confusion of L and R, etc.

It is to be noted that one of the characteristics of this language is the absolute lack of words having the sound of the Spanish r, which is a letter which they find quite unpronounceable, except with great effort on their part, and even then it is not pronounced correctly.

Their neighbors, however, that is the Tobas, Chulupís, and [237] Chiriguanos, do have an r sound. The Mocovitas serve as a sort of connecting link between the two and pronounce r in the French manner, that is, in their throats something like gr.

It may seem to many that the sound of the French r is more rather than less pronounced than the Spanish r, but I am of a contrary opinion, and base my affirmation on what I have observed among the Matacos, for whom it is easier to say Pegro than Pero, and Peilo than Pegro. Anyway, the fact that r can be pronounced (even though imperfectly) by the Matacos reveals that the lack of the sound r in the language of these Indians is not due to an organic defect in the speech apparatus but rather to convention or to the tongue's tendencies. Their not having practiced this sound for centuries on end combined with the action of physiological heredity may have been the cause of their having partially lost the ability to trill their r's as the Spanish do and, with the passage of time, this may result in their losing the ability to do so completely.

And yet it may just be that the whole difficulty is merely an aural one, the ear being unaccustomed to the new sound and, while striving to reproduce it, falling short of the mark because of the already settled habits of the mouth organs -- anyone of us who has attempted to learn one of the ever so many foreign languages has experienced the same thing.

c. The letter "D" and its variations

Neither can they pronounce the d clearly, although there are words which have sounds that come close to it, but always in the combination td and th and pronounced almost as the English do at the beginning of a word in which there is a pronounced occlusion. Examples: "How?" - tdé hoté; "he eats" - theucque; "marksman" [in Spanish tirador --Translator] - thilalol.

d. B, D, F, G, P, T, joined to the semivowel L.

I have yet to hear, from a Mataco, the pronunciation of b, d, f, g, p, t, jointed to an l or an r. This brings about those great changes in acquired Spanish words which render them almost unintelligible, as for example: ccailá instead of cabra; Pailó instead of Pablo; hl̃eno instead of freno; and hueiló instead of pueblo. And here is another peculiarity: a labial which makes up a single syllable with ua, ue, ui, uo, uu, they cannot pronounce, and in its stead they use an aspirated h voiced softly. This defect or degeneration of sounds is also to be met up with often among the country people in this Republic[Argentina--Translator]. So that they sometimes say g̃ueno instead of bueno, and juego instead fuego.

While on this subject of the articulation of these sounds it is remarkable how they agree with the pronunciation of my teacher of the Chinese language, an extremely intelligent cook called Ayaó who can write in his own tongue. The Chinese, apart from lacking the r, as is notorious [238] , cannot pronounce those same combinations of letters which the Matacos find impossible to manage, nor can they pronounce the d, among many others. So

it is that it often seems to men when I converse with Ayaõ, that I am talking to a Mataco, there being also certain common physical traits such as skin color, slanted eyes, coarse straight hair, and flattened nose. When he attempts to say adíos he says alio; instead of tres he says tles; instead of propio, lopio; instead of señora, señola; instead of teatro, teetelo. It is often almost impossible to guess the Spanish word which he is trying to copy, as, for instance, when he says teetelo for teatro; ollejaio for ovejas; lialio for diario; poole for pobre; huelo-líia for buen día and huela-loche for buena noche.

And, since we are talking about the subject, I must make note of the fact that I have been impressed that these Chinese have a large number of words ending in lo. It is also worth mentioning, or so it seems to me, the manner in which the l takes the place of r and also, in a general way, of the other sound combinations which they find difficult to reproduce. Regarding the r among the Chinese, I must confess that I have a word, among the two hundred collected, in which there is an r; it may be, however, that the position occupied by this letter contributes to facilitating its pronunciation, as happens with d among the Matacos. The word to which I refer is tai-hi-ró, teatro, in which the h is pronounced in such a way that it takes away much of the energy and forcefulness of the r. Can it be foreign? This language sacrifices a great deal to auphony and therefore has, where two vowels meet, more apostrophes than do French or Italian, for instance: nam-nu-am (meaning "not I") slides its syllables to such a degree that only one consonant and one re-enforced vowel are left. This gives rise to certain consonant groupings in which each consonant must be pronounced and given its due weight, as for example in atplei which must be pronounced at-pe-léi, almost átt-(e)-p-(e)-lei, and means "What is your name?" In this phenomenon there is a parallel with the common usage of French slang and with the English auxiliary verbs "do," "will," "shall," and so forth, when used in relaxed conversation. There are also duplicated consonants, even at the end of words, such as in yelatass, "horses." For this reason one must be cautious and weigh carefully each element contained in a word or a phrase, and not gloss over them carelessly. At the least expected moment we see

it reappear with all its train of syllables. These differences are of special importance in the oratorical art of these Indians. Mention must also be made, however, of the fact that word endings such as j and que are often suppressed and lost, their place being filled by placing an extra stress on the preceding letter. Example: yelatá for yelatáj, meaning "horse"; ndto'c for ndtó-cque, meaning "much." Furthermore, the position of accents varies in accord with the position of the word in a sentence. For example: asado["roast," barbicue--Translator] is pú-cuè, while "put on the roast" is ph'o a-pú-cue. These muted endings mentioned above reveal themselves when followed by another word or when the speaker wishes to pronounce the word carefully. The same thing occurs as happened to the French doncque (dunque) and avecque.

[239] e. Vowels and diphthongs.

In the study of these languages, if we use our five vowels in order to reproduce the Mataco sounds, we will find that we will inevitably have to use diphthongs. By diphthong I mean the union of two or more vowels which are to be pronounced simultaneously and in such a way as to reproduce that complex sound of the diphthong which includes all the component vowel sounds. These would be natural diphthongs which, if one could visualize them fixed in writing, would later give rise, because of the inevitable alternations in pronunciation, to conventional diphthongs such as the French ou, the Latin ae and oe, and the German eu. Therefore, I hold that in a written language all diphthongs are to be considered as symbols of a previous and different phonetic expression.

In studies of this sort it is obvious that the alphabet of any one language is quite insufficient, each language requiring an alphabet of its own -- unless one were willing to adopt a whole string of letters longer than a litany. We must add that our alphabet (the Italian) is really one of the poorer ones, particularly because of the lack of a gutteral sign and a sign signifying aspiration, two sounds which are very common in a large number of the world's languages. And our alphabet would be even poorer were

it not that it has been artificially enriched from outside by the addition of the letter k, which does not belong to us.

f. Sounds foreign to the Spanish phonetic system.

If we are to transcribe the Mataco language using the letters of our alphabet (the Italian), we must modify it in the following way which will, in a general and loose way, serve to transcribe many other languages: Addition of the German ch, (the German j would also be useful but it would be too easily confused with the Italian j which has the sound of i) an aspirated h as in certain French words; a sign to express the prolongation of a vowel sound (not its reduplication) for which the same h might do (as is the custom in German and which, in my opinion, goes hand in hand with the physical fact of the pronunciation of h); an English th, but having a quality somewhere between t and d, thus becoming a sort of consonant diphthong; an ou diphthong, not having the sound of the French u but spoken in such a way as to pronounce both vowels extremely quickly. The diphthongs öéü or éü are pronounced as has already been said; an aspirated nasal h, which I indicate with a comma on the upper left side, in order to be able to differentiate it, and a liquid l which is very similar to il. Vice versa, we must abolish certain letters from our alphabet, such as r, d, f, v, and only use b in combination with p, which latter is also to be used only with b and with a special sound the pronunciation of which can be [240] approximated with a final h, thus forming what might be called the diphthong p-h, the p ending with a breathy explosion.

In this way, and without the introduction of strange new characters which are never easily retained in the memory and which one would have had to know beforehand, I have transcribed my Mataco, my Guaraní, my Quichua, my Mocoví, my Chulupí, my Toba and my Chinese, with the Spanish phonetic system in my notes and with the Italian system in my books, to which latter end I substituted ch for j and i for y.

These signs are fairly well known so that we, (that is, the reader and I) who are not experts in the field of linguistics can read the words without any great pronunciation difference, thus

satisfying the requirements of the inquisitive, if not those of the scientist (1).

1. In this translation, as is the case in dictionaries, the Spanish alphabet has been used for the reproduction of Indian words. J.P.

A nasal intonation runs through the whole of this language. There is hardly an occasion when h, j and q at the beginning of a syllable is not pronounced nasally -- the exception being when the final consonants of the preceding syllable is lost. I have come upon this phenomenon in all the South American languages with which I have had anything to do, but in none has it been so marked as among the Matacos. It may be because I know the other languages even less than I do this one. It is to this tendency that I attribute the shift from the Spanish ending ando to the Indian anno -- for example: tomando changes to tomanno -- our European languages have not escaped this change unscathed, witness the two letters m and n of our alphabet, the sonorous en and em of French, and the strangely comic way in which everybody pronounces words of endearment addressed to little children.

Another characteristic of this language is the apparent arbitrariness of its sounds. The reader will readily be able to appreciate this by just leafing through the dictionary: there seems hardly a time when the same word is pronounced in the same way, even when spoken by the same person, and this is even worse when it forms part of a sentence. It is truly enough to drive one to despair (!) and would lead to who knows what comparisons of inferiority but that, fortunately for the Matacos, there is a complete vindication and absolute proof to the contrary in that most glorious, polyphonic, word-rich (and in this sense -- that is of arbitrariness of sounds -- similar) language: English!

Chapter IV

Of words and the manner of their formation

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It is interesting and amusing to see the way in which these people form words to designate an object new to them. Observation is the supreme teacher.

KQ
RG

[241] For example, their name for "small bell" is quíu-hút-tzét, meaning "spider belly" [no pun or connection in Spanish--Translator]; a rifle they call as our forefathers did, that is, arquebuse, that is, "fire bow" - itoj-letzej derived from itoj, "fire" and letzej, "bow"; they call "shot" "little bullets," as do the Italians, that is: c-lóquass, from c-lo meaning bullet and quass' which is a plural dimunutive ending. A piece of steel for striking fire with a flint, which they had never seen before (as was true also for all the things mentioned above) they call itoj-cquia, that is, "remedy or instrument of fire," while the flint itself they called ten-thé or stone; the wick they call itoj-léss from less meaning "sheaf," "bundle," "group," "family"; the cartridge shell they call c-lo-'hi from c-lo meaning bullet and 'hi, a particle which signifies "container" or "possession"; a mirror is tope-yaj-hi, tope-yaj meaning "image," "shadow"; a sock is ecolo-búth, which is derived from ecoló, "foot" and bhút, "covering." On the other hand shoe is to them nissót or sót, which proves that they already had knowledge of it, for they may on occasion use a kind of sandal such as that worn by the country people and called usutas. They make them from a piece of hide which serves as sole and two thongs which go between the large and second toe and are tied above the ankle. Matches [fósforos in Spanish--Translator] they call as we do ítossass, a contraction of itoj-quuass, which means "little fires"; and a match box is itoj-hi-huass, that is, "keeper of little fires."

A word which has always intrigued me and whetted my curiosity regarding its etymology is yúccúas which means tobacco, a product which was not known before in the Chaco. I think that I am not mistaken when I derive it from yu or iú, meaning "burned" and cúas, which means "to chew," "break up," "grind." As coincidence will have it, in these two activities both the use and the end result of the use of tobacco are involved. Furthermore, when an Indian says "give me some burned to chew" is he not saying pretty much what we do when we ask "give me something to smoke" [dame con que fumar in Spanish means literally "give me that with which to smoke"--Translator], that is, something to make smoke with?

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Another analogy in expression of thought -- in addition to those resulting from words in detail and from many other elements -- is to be found in the use of tẽi to designate eyes and face, similar to the poetic use amongst us present-day Italians of víso for face, from the Latin visus, which means "sight."

A door they call hlappé bhut or "door-opening coverer"; and in this I believe that they are more exact than we who lack a term as clear and precise as is this.

They use the same word huolẽi for wool, hair [cabello in Spanish is limited to "hair on the scalp"--Translator] and "hair" [pelo, that is, hair on any part of face or body other than scalp--Translator], but precede it with a name qualifying the respective object. We do the same thing but it passes unperceived when we say cabello to signify the hair of the scalp via a syncopation which puts its etymology on the wrong track. We have a great many such misleading word shifts in our language, and the Matacos have even more [242] which makes it even more difficult to keep tabs on them.

They use the same word huolẽi for the leaves of trees, thus giving one to understand that for them leaves are the hair of trees. And really they come close in this to the actual physical facts for the trees which predominate in the Chaco are of the minosa family and have leaves which are complexly and minutely subdivided, thus giving rise to the botanical term "pinnate" and "bipinnate" which are terms that justify the Mataco name which is in such close agreement with the meaning of the scientific term pinnate [from the Latin pinna meaning feather--Translator].

It is worthwhile mentioning the way in which they distinguish between the tree and its fruit -- this is done by means of an inflection; for example: the mistol tree is O'hó-yucqué, its fruit is o'hóyaque; the vinal tree is attécque, its fruit attáje; the black algarrobo tree is uossot-etzúje, its fruit uossot-etzáje, and so forth.

One notices here the constant change of u to a. We do nothing different when we call the pear tree pero and its fruit pera, the apple tree manzano and its fruit manzana, and so forth. This does not mean that there are not other ways of naming these things.

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M6

The names used for human family relationships change with the sex of the person involved. Need this startle us who have "mother" and "father," yerno [son-in-law--Translator] and nuera [daughter-in-law--Translator] which might more practically have been yerno, yema. It is strange that all languages seem to run along the same lines, the American ones being no exception. What is more, these latter not only make a distinction between the sex of the relative who is referred to but also between that of the person speaking. For example: in Araucano the father refers to his son as fotún and to his daughter as ñahue, while the mother calls her son coñi huenthú, coñi being the general term for "child" in the mother's terminology. In Quichua the father calls his son churi and his daughter ususí, while the mother uses the term huahua.

In the Chinese language, according to my interpreter Ayao, whom I hired not long ago for two francs an hour, son is Tsaé, and daughter, Pnoé; father is Lu-tao; mother Loúmuú; brother, Ghoó-séí-lóu; and sister, Ttaí-tzt-é.

In Mataco we have the following names: father, quía; mother, ccó; son, locsé or lotsé; daughter, lectzá; brother-in-law, quayenécque; sister-in-law, ticquié; brother, lecquiilá or cjculá; sister, cjinno; uncle, uitoc; aunt, uidóje; nephew, lec-jíe-ios (probably a combination of son and brother); niece, cjíaió; father-in-law, quióti; mother-in-law catelá; cousin, huac-lá. I find that the terms for son-in-law and daughter-in-law are the same as those used for brother-in-law and sister-in-law, and the term for brother-in-law is also used for son-in-law, which leads me to believe that I made a mistake in my notes.

The various words used to designate the same degree of [243] relationship, according to whether it be male or female must be attributed, in my opinion, to the agglutinative system adopted in the beginning in order to determine it, but whose etymological genesis subsequent alterations have caused to become lost. The fact is clear that for a married couple a nephew, for example, must be, for one of them, the son of a sister or brother, and for the other of a brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

If we draw together into a lump the words which express these diverse relationships, we shall find that the same degree of

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family relationship, let us say, for example, a nephew, has four different names.

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An equally interesting form is that used for the demonstrative pronouns, which is similar to French usage for it is composed of the pronoun toj meaning "this one" (corresponding to the French ce) and certain particles of location such as licné for "that one over there"; letti or lani for "that one"; and others, among which are tzi for "this one." This tzi is equivalent to chi and to quii and is interesting because we come upon it again in the Araucanian language. These demonstrative pronouns also have an adjectival use, and when so employed, become separated, the toj part being prefixed to the noun and the licné, tzi etc. being suffixed, these latter can then not be declined, but the former (that is, toj) is declined. Now then, does not the same thing happen with French demonstratives? For instance with ceci and cela, which in the plural form are ceux-ci, ceux-la, and become separated when applied to some other term.

And do such similarities in form not reveal a great harmony in human intelligence, the same linguistic recourses being used to express a like order of ideas in spite of the distance which separates the different races?

The following derivation deserves special mention because it is revealing of a whole order of ideas: "No" is ka, "nothing" is kiá, "nobody" is kiái; the three words keep to the same root, and in a way which is clearer and more logical than our corresponding words. Likewise we have tde meaning "no" and that meaning "nothing," these two terms used always at the end of a word or phrase.

Tell me now, what more elegant and more compactly logical does philology have to show than the manner in which the Matacos express possessing, containing, executing, or exercising a skill? The letter h (when it has an apostrophe it is to be pronounced nasally) shows up in many words, not to say all, which express possession or capacity. Now hi and huu express that which contains, he who possesses, and he who does something; huet means "house," "the place in which." For example: "fish" is yácsét, "fish pond" is yácsétte-hi; "shoes" are hissóhéss, "seller of shoes" is nissohésse-hi, "maker of shoes" is nissohésse-huu, and "shoe shop" is nissohésse-huet. And in all analogous cases they use the same

constructions. In what way can it be said that they are behind other languages? 192 196

[244] Thus for Venus they employ the same verbal image as we and the Latins do, that is lucero ["morning star"--Translator] ijuála-hu, "mother of the day"; similarly they call the wrist "mother of the hand," tcué-huo; the abispa tic-lan [Enigmatic. The closest I can get to any logical meaning is "the tic-lan wasp," which is not helpful at all--Translator] they call "mother of the tic-lan, tic-lán-huu; and the beating of the pulse is "little heart," tdul-lecuáj.

The Mataco language may be lacking in certain particular sounds (articulations) but, on the other hand, it has a superfluity of other particular sounds (articulations). Among these latter the following stand out: quiá, quié, quií, quío, quiú, and cquiá, and so forth, which together with others of similar sound are so frequent as to leave one in some doubt as to whether the language is not made up of the same syllable repeated a thousand times over in the same sense. We know already that quiá, quié etc. can change places with tzá, tzé and so forth, or with chiá, chié, etc., or with tchiá, tchié, etc. Furthermore the inversion of the constituent elements of a word is frequent, for example: "wide" is quĕ-tzaj-hu and also i-tzaj-quié -- it can therefore be readily understood to what extent Indian oratory can spread itself out and expand, as far as form goes, without really saying anything different. This sort of thing must be very generalized. General Mansilla in his outstanding book Una expedición a los Indios Ranqueles ["An expedition to the Ranquel Indians"--Translator] tells of having experienced this Indian fondness for repetitiveness, and I did also among the Tobas when we were harangued for half an hour and were really only told the same thing in several different ways according to Faustino the interpreter. 195

In their formation of compound words they follow the English and German usage: for example: "gloves," which are handschuhe in German, that is "hand shoes," are cqŭéĭ-pbut among the Indians, that is "hand coverers." The same thing happens in negative sentences; example: "I do not see," is Ich sehe nicht in German and nu-ihenni-tde in Mataco, that is, "I see not," which is also precisely the manner of expression of the inhabitants of the areas surrounding Milan. 192 193

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They have general terms which represent certain abstractions such as "bird," "fish," "tree," and also particular ones with which they differentiate between particular species. What is more they even have abstract nouns, for in addition to such words as "never," "always," they have others, "fear" for instance, which they call uâi, a word which also means "tremor" or "trembling." For earthquake they say hunat uâi, which means "earth tremble," just as in Spanish one says "tremor of the earth." Can it be therefore that for the Matacos to fear is to tremble? Is it not in this way, taking the part for the whole, that our own abstract terms came into being in the great majority of cases? Now trembling is one, the commonest, of the many outward manifestations of fear.

I affirm that these Indians are in full possession of the human intellectual faculties and ability to judge rationally, and these developed to such a degree that they can be considered our equals both in their way of reasoning and in their antiquity. The gap which exists between them and us is one which exists only in the actual world of facts and of the ideas which refer to [245] those facts -- a gap which is in no way proportional to that which exists between their intellectual faculties and ours. And this is easily understood.

How many years have gone by, how many were and how many are the individuals amongst us who have taken full advantage of the intellectual benefits of science, ethics and higher education generally? Very small in number are they if we take into account the historical antiquity of man and the number of men who have lived. The effects, therefore, of human psysiological traits must have changed the common heritage of humanity in the whole world during the period of its limited civilizations very little, if at all.

The fact of not having reflected on this phenomenon is the cause behind the ignorant persons's astonishment at being confronted with the advanced conditions and relative progress to be found amongst savage peoples.

The short intellectual and moral distance which separates them from us is an eloquent testimony to the hoary antiquity of man, dating back to the separation of man from his pre-human ancestors, which dwarfs into insignificance the few years which separate us from a state of savagery akin to that in which these Indians live.

Chapter V

Augmentatives and Diminutives

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Another thing which almost drove me to insanity was the nomenclature of the domestic animals which were introduced to America from Europe at the time of the discovery or conquest.

It is well known that when new things are introduced into previously unopened areas the names of these things are also introduced. It is also known that this fact has been of inestimable value, not only to philologists but also to ethnographers, that is, to those who deal with and study the distribution and description of the earth's peoples.

Very well then, -- it would happen that when I asked for the local names for horse, cow, sheep, etc., the Indians would answer with names which were absolutely different from the Spanish names.

Even now I get an urge to laugh when I remember the tortures to which I submitted the Mataco words in order to try to boil them down, by dint of hypothetical changes and shifts, to their Spanish roots.

I was fortunate enough one day to catch two pigeons in a trap.

We had on board with us a beautiful bulldog. In Mataco the word for dog is sinój, and we had named our dog Palomo ["pigeon"--Translator], which the Matacos [246] literally translated into their own language as ucquinataj. One day it happened that an Indian, on patting the dog, said, by way of expressing his admiration: Sinoj-táj! instead of Sinoj or Ucquinatáj. I started then to realize that the particle taj expressed size of superiority, that it was a loose or floating affix, and that it could be added to or taken from other words in order to modify their meaning. I flew to my note books, leafed through the pages, ran through my lists of nouns, added taj to those which did not have it, and in an instant there sprang up before my eyes, to my immense satisfaction, the true, beautiful, philosophic, scientific etymologies of my quiuuasse-táj, "cow"; yelatáj, horse; chíonataj, "sheep"; quiuasset, "deer"; yeláj, "tapir"; chionaj, "doe" -- with the famous taj which enlarges, ennobles and stretches them and declares them to be superior.

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So it was that it suddenly dawned on me, that in those words, which I had jotted down in their scores, and which ended in taj, I must eliminate that syllable, as also the famous uu or a or la, and tune my ear and sharpen my eye for the sounds which were basic and essential to each word. At the same time that I started to see this more clearly, I began to discover the genesis and the laws governing the word changes.

From there on a new region began to open up for me into which I readily and happily entered.

I hope that the reader will not become scandalized at this sort of enthusiasm which he may perceive in me. In my position he might well have experienced the same thing, for man is a slave to circumstances -- any Minister of State who becomes for a while a private soldier will take pleasure in noticing the look of approval from his corporal for a well executed "present arms"; as will the philosopher when praised by his lady for having helped her to untangle her skein of wool.

So how could a nobody such as I not feel pleasure on seeing, in his own hands, so to speak, a language which had been considered impoverished and of no account, take shape and flower into a methodical and elegant tongue?

Well,anyway -- these Matacos have an augmentative particle: taj, which is used to indicate physical, "moral" and descriptive qualities. So from ĩcnú, man, they form ícnú-taj, large man, from inót, "water," they form inót-táj "fire water" or brandy, and from ahló, pole or rod, they form ahlotáj-yacaré, "almost pole" or "nearly pole."

As a diminutive they sometimes use the particle quuáj and quiáj; for example: from colõ, foot, they derive coló-quuáj, little foot; from cuéi, hand, they make cuéi-quiáj, little hand. They also use this latter term to indicate a person who is either lacking a hand -- or the whole arm -- or has a severe malformation in it. [The word "manco" in Spanish means any one of these--Translator.] So a chief called Manco in Spanish -- he actually lacked a hand -- was called in Mataco Cuéi-quuáj. This diminutive particle is also added to pronouns, a thing which cannot be done in Italian but can in Spanish, to wit: esa - esita ["That (feminine) one" -- "that little (feminine) one"--Translator] --which is very frequently used by country people.

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These suffixes taj and quuaj and quiaj, although they are well defined particles, may nevertheless, and probably ought to, be considered as [247] inflections, for they mean nothing by themselves and furthermore it is they which are declined and not the words to which they are attached (1). And it is worth noting that

1. I find in my notes that taj is sometimes a shortened form of oitaj, meaning "almost."

in the matter of declension they follow a rule quite contrary to the one used for the suffixes corresponding to demonstrative pronouns; the same phenomenon which is encountered in French and Italian diminutives. Taj and quiaj, of which the plurals are tass and quiáss, divide and separate as do the demonstratives, for example: "box of matches" is itoj-ʾhi-cuass, that is "fire-box-little"; a case of incorporation (2).

2. In Mataco, "matches" is translated as "little fires," itoj-huaj (euphonic h in place of c), thus following our usage even in this detail.

Finally, it seems that they habitually place an i in front of a foreign word. For example the Spanish ñato ["snub nose"--Translator] becomes iñato, in which they coincide with the Mocoví Indians. It may be just a simple euphonic exigency.

Chapter VI

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Some curious cases of onomatopoea and sound similarities.

Only very few words in this Indian language can be considered onomatopoetic, that is, imitative of the sounds they express. Which phenomenon of sound imitation is considered by some to be the origin of human language, developed later by man's intelligence.

To shout or yell is óhn; lightning is jlépp; dumb or mute is huó-huó; cough is cacojtáss; cricket is li-tzil; parrot is quie-quié

and pelican [sic.], commonly called chajá ["Crested screamer" is W. H. Hudson's name for this large, goose sized bird--Translator] is tzá-coj, both names being derived from the bird's call. Many other words are to be found similar to these. 182 196

Following I shall set down a few Mataco words which are similar in sound to those found in Old World languages. 192

Si["yes"--Translator] in Mataco is hié, in English "yes," in German ya, and in Italian gia. "No" in Mataco is ka, in the Tuscan dialect of Italian cke, and kein ("nobody") in German. "Son" is tzé or ssé in Mataco, tzé in Bohemian, tzae tze in Chinese. Enfermo ["ill"--Translator] is iell or yell in Mataco, "ill" in English. "For" is op in Mataco, ob in Latin--it may be added that p and b are interchangeable in all languages with the greatest of ease. "Countryside" or "field" is ajlú in Mataco, agro in Latin and Italian -- let it be remembered that the Matacos use l in place of r, so that ajlú takes the place of ajrú -- "dog" is sinoj in Mataco, cynos in Greek. The next few words contain similar letters in inverted order such as in the previously mentioned "melon" - nelom: "rooster" is húh or kúh in Mataco, coq in French; "cricket" is li-tzil in Mataco, zillo in Tuscan; casa ["house"--Translator] is hauet in Mataco, haus in German, [248] "house" in English, and huasi in Quichua; con ["with"--Translator] is uuitd in Mataco, "with" in English; "and" is ut-cuei in Mataco, atque in Latin.

Furthermore, and as an additional point of interest, I must say that there is, in Chinese, a superabundance of the syllables tzié, tzié, etc., schié, schié, (sch to be pronounced as is the Catalonian x), tzá, tzé, etc., as also ttai or tai, which mean "big"; and lo, the meaning of which is still unknown to me but which I repeatedly come across at the end of words. This fact, combined with its pronunciation, which is practically identical to Mataco pronunciation, merits serious reflection on the part of the linguist, not because of any real relationship but as a phenomenon of concurrence.

Chapter VII

Gender, Number, case, syncopation. Article?

a. Gender

It does not seem to me that the nouns have gender -- only in pronouns and in demonstrative adjectives are there to be found certain changes which make me suspect a gender differentiation. Yet this goes no further than the merest suspicion.

Withal, they do suffix the ending tziná to the names of female animals, which means "female," and, when used alone and not attached to another word, means "woman"; for example, "mare" is yélaiáj-tziná. In order to indicate a male animal they usually add asnáj, which actually means "male."

b. Number

I was so sure that these inhabitants of the Chaco must possess a plural formed by the joining or placing in close proximity of some word indicative of the concept of plurality, such as "much" or some other like word, that I was for ever in search of it. Actually there was nothing unnatural about such an idea -- the Guaraní Indians do in fact use such a linguistic device, heta, which placed beside a singular immediately imparts plurality to it; the Quichuas also do likewise by suffixing cuna, and these two nations of Indians are or were neighbors of the Matacos. Many other peoples use the self same artifice which is called agglutination; the Akka of Africa do so too.

It seemed therefore quite natural that the smaller should follow in the footsteps of the larger. Furthermore, is it not often stated that agglutination is common to the less advanced languages?

[249] It is a fact that in this case also it would seem as if the peoples who utilize this recourse are the least advanced -- actually this is very far from the truth.

In short, every language system has its weak points, which nevertheless do not detract from their basic usefulness among those who utilize it. It was therefore proper for me to accept this

linguistic canon as a sort of maxim.

However, the answers to my questions in which plurals were used were anything but satisfactory. Sometimes the plural of a word would end in one way, then another plural would end differently, and in all plurals there could be inserted a ntocq, meaning "much." What is more, just as all the rest of the expression varied, so also did one remain in the dark regarding the element connoting plurality. I would formulate my questions with numbers and the doubt still remained. For example: "Two horses?" I would ask, and the answer would come "horses two"; "two men?" "two icnú, icnul, or icnuíl." They appeared to be endings with different variations due to changes in pronunciation rather than to any other cause.

I repeat all this because it may be of some service to any of the many travelers who enjoy spending time among savages, either in Africa or in America. If they are not already too proud of their own knowledge and acumen it may stand them in good stead.

Meanwhile, I was surprised to gather that "we" and "you" [vosotros is 2nd person plural in familiar address--Translator] were formed directly from the singulars "I" and "thou" [tú, is 2nd person singular in familiar address--Translator] by means of the same affix. Thus, from noj-lám, meaning "I," noj-lám-il, "we," is derived; from am -- meaning "thou," they form am-il, meaning "you" [2nd person plural--Translator] -- but in this case it was a matter only of those pronouns in which there are many rule exceptions. Nevertheless this very thing, by calling my attention to a given case, gave me the key to the riddle.

These Matacos not only have a plural which they form with ntocq -- "much," but also possess others which are arrived at in different ways and by means of assorted inflections. To sum up, they have divers declensions which are exclusive of each other and which hold, in a general way, to the following rules:

Words ending in either o or velar e add i to make the plural. Thus colo, meaning "foot," becomes coloi, "feet"; huentié, "little bird," becomes huentíei, "little birds." Words ending in aj change j to ss -- in this category fall all the augmentatives ending in taj and all diminutives ending in quiaj, for

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example: igüela -- "moon" or "month," becomes igüelass, "months"; yelataj -- "horse," becomes yelatass, "horses." Words ending in u take an l, which is pronounced by pressing part of the tongue against the palate and sounds like il, for example: cannú, meaning needle, becomes cannúl, almost cannuil, "needles." Words ending in t, oj and other letters take ess for the plural; thus: yápset, "fish," becomes yápsetéss, "fishes"; tdoj, "hide or skin," becomes tdojess, "hides." Words ending in l often add ess [sic.], sometimes losing the final l in the process; example: tzel, "belly," [250] tzeliss, "bellies"; yel meaning "a sick person" becomes yiss (or yéliss), "sick persons"--this last being a fine example of shift.

Many exceptions have their place here too, of course, and probably other rules, but they are not included here so as to avoid becoming burdensome.

I am almost willing to believe that they have a dual approach to plurality as have the Araucano and Guaraní Indians, and the Greeks in Europe, but I cannot give any real assurance of it. To this effect I site from my notes: cqüéí -- the hand, cquéyai, both hands; noj-lamil -- we, noj-lamáss, we two; amil you [2nd person plural familiar --Translator], amass, you two. I repeat, however, that I am not sure but that it is a duplicated plural form.

As far as numerals go they can use, or not, as they see fit, a plural for following nouns, in which case use of a plural is, so to speak, redundant. Adjectives they do not pluralize, and they place them before nouns.

c. Case

I have not come across enough examples to allow me to affirm that this language has case declension unless one wishes to construe as such the genitive suffix ca. Here is an example of the use of this suffix: Peilo-ca-Uicquii, which means "Pedro's people." Their use of postpositions (corresponding to our prepositions) can be considered as cases.

In spite of this I must give fair warning that the personal pronouns "I" and "thou," at least in the singular, have case declension, while toj, meaning "this one" seems only to have an accusative toja.

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The declension of those pronouns which I have been able to glean are as follows:

Singular	Singular
Nom. I: nojlam, nu, no'ni.	Nom. Thou: am, or ham, and a
Gen. of me: noj-ca	Gen. Of thee: aj-cá
Dat. To me: nú-ho	Dat. To thee: ám-u or hám-u
Ac. Me: nuy-a or nu	Ac. Thee: ám-a and a-i
Ablat. With me: nuy-ej	Ablat. With thee: ám-ej or ám-quie.
Plural	**Plural**
Nom. We: noj, lam-il, na or inát	Nom. You [familiar]: am-il or a
Nom. [sic.] Us: noj, lam-áss and in-namáss	Nom. [sic.] You [familiar]: am-ass, or á

It is my opinion that the ending l and il must be some degeneration of the word el, which means "other" and which was originally used to express the plural, which plural is therefore [251] nothing else than a forgotten agglutinative form which has evolved by means of progressive alterations.

d. Syncopation

Syncopation is very common in this language, doubtless for reasons of euphony, but the alteration and confusion it brings about in words give rise to many errors and make the study of the language very difficult. For example: "Do you love me?" is Yajemín nuya, which is a shortened form of yaj-a-hemin nuya. "I do not love you" is Namahemin, which comes from Nu-am-a-hemin. I myself, shortly before writing these lines, thought that nam must mean "no," which then threw me into confusion because in this present example I could not find the particle nu.

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expressive of the first person. Only after having checked and compared numerous sentences were my eyes opened to the real facts.

Chapter VIII

Regarding Negative Forms

The Mataco language contains a great many negatives which occupy various positions. It is curious to note their strange similarity to the Indian languages of North America spoken by nations which one would never have supposed to be related at all.

The most common of these negatives is ka, meaning "no," which can be used alone and also prefixed to adjectives thus contradicting the meaning of the word; for example: matt means "it is true," while ka-matt means "it is false." It is strange indeed that the Akkas, those so-called pygmies of Africa have this same word in their language with the same meaning "no," according to the grammatical essay of Abbot Beltrame of Verona.

Another negative particle is tdé, which is always suffixed, for example: mát -- "true"; matti-tdé, "false."

Note the extra i which is added to soften the word. These additions and eliminations of stray letters cause great difficulty and make the student of this language lose his way at every turn, despairing of ever getting to the end of his problems. Let us look at another example: nu-huen means "I have," hue-ni-tde, "I have not."

Then there is am, which is prefixed to verbs, as for example: n'am-huen, which signifies "I do not have." There also is yaj, which is both interrogative and imperative and is prefixed to verbs; it is the ne of the Latins, except for its position. Another negative particle is laja, which also means "without." Examples of the foregoing are: "Don't kill me," yaj-lon-nu; "Do you love me?", Yaj-a-hemin-nuya? "Widow" is laja-chiécuó-ya, that is, "husbandless one."

[252] Chapter IX

Regarding Adjectives

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a. Their usage

I have now before me the tangled problem of adjectives, comparatives, superlatives, numerals, and verb flections. There is no reason to prefer one to another and so I start with the one first mentioned.

One would think that adjectives ought to be like so many isolated plant stems, growing in such a way that a mere touch of the hand would be sufficient to turn them aside in order to pass easily by. Such is not the case. There are some which have their roots and even their branches so intertwined and enmeshed that one has need of an axe to untangle them.

There are a good many adjectives which are so rooted as to make it impossible to ascertain their beginning and their end -- in fact, most of the Mataco adjectives fall into this category. There are others, though, the geneology of which is quite evident. Among these are the possessives, which are formed from pronominal roots to which the particle ca, meaning "of," (also used as a genitive postposition) and co, which must be considered as a modification of ca, has been attached. In addition to ca and co they also use lo with the same possessives, especially, or so it seems to me, with "of mine," "of thine"; thus "of mine" (nuj) is nuj-ca, nuj-co, and nuj-lo; while "of thine" is ac-co and al-lo; and "whose?" ("of whom?") is atdec-lo.

Another way of forming these adjectives is with the addition of tzaj. For example: "fear" is uáí or huái and "fearful" is huain-tzaj. Another possibility is with ya, but this is really more like a present participle. Example: nu-huai-ya, means "I fearful," "that I am afraid"; acchecuoya means "that you have a wife" or "that you have a husband."

Yet another way is to place the postposition ej beside the noun. Example: "hunger" is na-in-ló; while "hungry one" is na-in lo nej; "now" is cquiá, (which literally means "fresh" or "new") and "of now," "as of now" is cquiá-yej.

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And while on this subject of adjectives it is worth remarking that practically all those which express the opposite of some quality, usually of a good quality, are made up of the adjective denoting that quality plus a negative particle which either precedes or follows it. Thus, for example: "true" is matt, and "false," ka-matt or mattildé, that is to say "not true." "Good" and "pretty" or "nice" are hiss and tzî, while "ugly" is kat-zía and tzitdé; "far" is tocuery, "near," tocuei-tde, which can also be expressed by ca-tu-ta, in which catú means "elbow" and by analogy "curve," "around the corner," and so forth.

These negative particles are also used with nouns. For example: [253] "remedy" or "cure" is ckia, while poison is kackía ("no remedy," "no cure"). Do we not find the same type of usage in our own languages when we say "uncertain" for "not certain" and "discourteous" for "not courteous"?

One might say, however, that these Indians lack certain refinements of which our language can boast and which tend to soften certain expressions, as for instance the subtle distinction between "false" and "not true," "far" and "not near."

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Be that as it may, they still are not lacking in other distinctions, such as that existing between "stranger" and "foreigner." The former they call ajlu-taj-jlé-lé, which means "outsider," and the latter they call ic-quiomjlé-lé, that is, "he from below." And so he is, for from the Mataco point of view foreigners live "below," downriver and off past Paraguay. Upstream from them live the whites, whom they call Chihuéle.

Where did they get this word Chihuéle? Has it something to do with color? "White" is in their language pelaj, and "yellow," yaccatdé, that is, "not black," which proves that the opposite of black is for them yellow. Surely they do not consider us green or blue, however much their eyes may suffer from Daltonism. Can it be that they look upon us as red? This cannot be so either for red is icquiótt, which is a far cry from Chihuéle.

The actual fact is that Chihuéle means "good looking men."

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Let us study this. Chí, as we have already stated, is the same as tzí, and also the same as quí. Now tzi is a root found in ka-tzi-a and in tzitdé which mean "not good" (or "not nice") and "good not" (or "nice not"). Furthermore it is to be found in tzilataj or chilataj, meaning "good," "nice." (The local whites, by the way, mispronounce the first part of this word and say chilátta). Chilatáj is made up, in the first place, of táj which is an augmentative particle, and Chíla. In the word Chíla, the la is a particle which, as was seen in the section treating lo, ca and co, if suffixed to the root has an adjective-forming function. So it is that Chí is the root giving the basic meaning to Chílataj. Chilataj, however, means "good," "nice" to a superlative degree, so that chi is indicative of "beauty."

We have seen that c-lelé is a word which means "which is of." Now, there can be no difficulty in accepting, for a language such as this one which sacrifices so many nuances of sound, that c-lelé has become modified and changed into güele or huéle by degeneration or because of some other shift the laws of which have not yet been discovered. Therefore Chihuéle is the same as Chic-léle, which means "those who are of the good (or nice, or goodlooking) ones," that is "The Goodlooking Ones."

I hope I may be forgiven for taking pleasure in an etymology which allows me to participate in, (although I do not deserve to) and be counted as possessing one of those four qualities declared by the Greek philosopher as indispensable for happiness, to wit: comfort, true friends, love of music and good looks [254] or to be considered so, which amounts to the same thing for all practical purposes.

Now amongst these Indians, even if one is somewhat ugly, one must yet, by comparison seem almost goodlooking, which is great -- are not these word forms therefore rational? They reveal a process of word formation by agglutination.

b. Regarding comparatives

In order to form the comparatives they use homo ehom, which means "more," together with taj, which expresses superiority.

These two words in a comparison are not joined by any equivalent to our "than" [In Spanish comparatives are formed with de or que; the foregoing "than" does not fully translate these terms--Translator.], such as in the following example: "Peter is a better boy than Paul," because they, in this case, would also say, by means of a circumlocution: "Peter is a better boy than Paul is not." This is a somewhat strange construction, but I find that it crops up repeatedly in my notes. Very often the particle ya follows the comparative, which leads me to believe that there are other comparative forms, although I have not discovered them as yet.

c. Regarding the Superlative

To form the superlative they habitually use ntócq which means "much," as is the custom in so many other tongues. They sometimes lengthen the sound of a syllable. For example: "far" is tocuéy; "very far" is tocuéey, the word being accompanied by appropriate gestures. This is also customary amongst the Araucanos and we ourselves use it in certain cases. It is quite natural and logical.

Another way of arriving at a superlative construction is by affixing a to the positive -- for instance: the comparative of the Indian word "his," which means "nice, pretty," is ha-is, "very pretty, very nice"; tocuéy, far, becomes a-tocuéy, very far.

As I have already said they have an augmentative taj and a diminutive quiaj or cuaj, particles which are suffixed and which are declinable while the noun to which they are attached remains unalterable -- their declension consists in changing j to ss for the plural.

In order to say "less" they use yaj-lom, which is the same as yaj-lehom, that is "no more," made up of the particle le plus hom; another example of agglutination, common in this type of adjective. This language is apparently extraordinarily logical, and once having started out in a given direction persists in it to the end. The problem then, in the first place, is to understand this construction, and then to keep from losing sight of it in its many twists and turns. [255]

1: Pelleschi--168 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

Chapter X

Regarding Numerals

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In general it can be said that the Indians of the Chaco can count only up to four. This holds true for: the Mocovies who are bounded on the south by the provinces of Santa Fe and Córdoba and on the west by the province of Santiago; the Matacos who in the same direction have a common border with the latter and with Orán; the Tobas who are bounded by said nations and the river Paraguay, along the banks of which they penetrate Bolivian territory; the Vilelas and Chulupíes, who at the time of this writing amount to only a tribe or family or two and are either dispersed among the other nations named above or have been absorbed by them.

However, there also are the Chiriguanos and possibly other nations in addition, all of whom are established in the Bolivian section of that immense wooded plain called the Gran Chaco and who can count indefinitely. There are also the other Indian groupings who live in the northern regions of the Chaco and who are able to count beyond four if I am to give credence to my first mate on the boat who, although he was a Mataco, supplied me with terms expressive of larger figures. These he had gathered from outside contact.

A propos of this matter of being able to count only up to four, I see that Quatrefages, in his last work La especie humana ["The Human Species"--Translator], seems to doubt this fact, which he interprets differently yet without supplying any explanation for his thesis. It would seem that he could not bring himself to admit such a phenomenon, and would only go as far as to accept that certain peoples might lack actual numbers beyond four but never the concept of such numbers. But even if we can accept such a hypothesis as possible psychologically so to speak, the facts, looked at from the point of view of philology, belie it. Understanding as we do that there is the closest of affinities between word and idea, one must admit that the latter, without the former, at very best can only exist in a vague, confused and undefined state which evades communication. We ourselves, for instance, are unable to use the technical terms of a given art or science of which we are not masters, however well we may know and differentiate between their products.

Just to clarify this I shall cite a personal case which will be helpful to the reader in arriving at an opinion.

I was talking to a chief who was recounting his feats of prowess to me for the first time.

In answer to my question: "Where are you from?" he unexpectedly answered: Num-maitta-ntocq-Téüj-tocuéy, stretching and then drawing back his right arm as he pointed towards the North.

[256] I was very much surprised and said, interrupting him; Ntde-ʾhije? -- "Where?" -- I had understood him to say that he wanted to tell me about a town on the Teuco River, called Umaitá like that town in Paraguay near the mouth of the Bermejo, and my curiosity became excited to a great pitch with the idea that I was about to make an ethnographic discovery of importance.

What he had actually tried to say to me was this: "I-(nu) killed many far away on the Teuco."

Nu ilon ntócq (I have killed many)...; and right away he commenced to count in Mataco from one to four, enclosing his right hand in his left and opening his fingers one by one, all except his thumb. But when he got to four he was at a loss how to go on, yet as he was squatting, he began to make vertical lines in the earth with his finger saying Toj each time he did so, which means "this one," and every now and then he would raise his head and his hand with his thumb concealed by his four fingers and say, looking at me; Uitd toj which means "and this also," and thus he continued about twenty times, always being careful to drive home to me that in addition to the lines he was making on the ground I must remember the original four which he had counted on his hand. At last he put an end to his counting by saying ntocq ntocq which is "many, many."

And this was very true. This chief had been at one time the scourge of the frontier whites and the whip of his Indian enemies until finally, old and much battered by the whites, he left off warring, gained a government pension and settled down with all his followers -- very much reduced in numbers -- near Fort Gorriti, on the left bank of the Bermejo River. It happened that near Fort Aguirre, on the right bank of the Teuco, some 50 kilometers northeast of Gorriti, another band of Indians had attempted an invasion but were themselves the object of a surprise attack in their village, part of their number being killed and others imprisoned.

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These latter, bound and with their hands tied behind their backs, elbow to elbow and forming a chain of some 30 or 40 individuals, were handed over to the chief so that he might put them to death. He did most of the killing himself with a spear. While the massacre was in progress most of the victims remained silent, while others kept up a continual murmuring such as is done in their religious ceremonies. These were, without a doubt, witchdoctors.

I passed through the place of this tragedy five years after the event and could see no sign of human bones belonging to the victims' unburied corpses. The flood waters had carried them off and the winds had covered all remains. Only after much searching and with the help of a soldier who had witnessed the event was I able to find three skulls by digging among some bushes. The national government tried to punish the officer in charge of Fort Aguirre and it [257] is possible that this was done. However, one must accept the fact that there is no possible compatibility between civilized and savage elements; and all individual philanthropy, all a priori reasoning made far from the scene, lose their practical validity in this theater of fighting brought about by the head-on collision of the two races. Each one thinks that the destruction of the enemy is the easiest and also the most natural expedient in the world. Therefore the final extermination of the Redskins at the hands of the whites is inevitable, by means of cold steel, fire, expatriation and mass dispersion as though they were beasts.

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Coming back to the matter of numerals, one must never be led to suppose that these Indians are not aware that 10 fish are half of 20 fish. A dog, when he rushes upon a second bone thrown to him and growls because some other dog tries to get the first bone, is also responding to the same perceptual stimulus. Nevertheless the fact of not possessing an adequate word for expressing this recognition reveals, in my opinion, a lack of abstraction. The form of a language and the very manner in which words evolve from their original sounds owe much to the state of maturity of the speakers' capability for mental abstraction.

Regarding the Mataco words used to indicate the first four numbers, I must say that their great length and the gesticulations which went with them surprised me very much. It seemed to me that each one of these expressions, if it was to justify its accompanying

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gesticulations, must be a whole sentence. Even though a great deal of time has elapsed I think I can still explain them and not fall into error as I do so.

"One" is hoté-cuuaj ʾhi, and one finger is raised. One can also say hoteji and hotecoaji. Now hoté means "as," cuuáj means "finger," and hi (nasal h) is a particle which indicates possession, container etc. so, not worrying too much about this small elemental difference which is so common in every language, and especially in this one which undergoes so many shifts, we may say that the translation of hotécuaji is: "as finger has" ("this which I show"). 802 201 192

"Two" is hoté quuasi, and two fingers are raised. Quuas is the plural, so to speak, of cuoaj according to this tongue, and thus the translation of the above is "as fingers has."

"Three" is laj tdi qua yél, and three fingers are raised, the little finger remaining folded and covered by the left hand. Now laj means "without" or "no"; el means "other"; quai is too similar to quoají to allow for doubt, and so we may say that the translation is "without the other finger." The same may be said for lája echecuoya -- "widower without a husband" [sic].

"Four" is tdi qualéss híquí and I don't know how to go about translating it literally and so shall not try. However one can perceive that in qualéss there is a plural iqui form, which is a word that often accompanies hi, and which [258] is to be found in phrases in which we have the idea of "to be" expressed, with other analogous ones -- it is therefore probable that it refers to the gestures which go with each numeral.

These gestures were not made only by that chief but also by other Indians of the central Chaco and by Faustino who could count as well as any of us. There must be some relation between the gestures and the words. The etymologies which I offer, in my opinion, explain the case more satisfactorily than those which are usually given in analogous philological problems.

However, one must not judge the worth and elegance of the original by the literal translations. Where would the elegance of most compound words be if we translated their Greek originals directly? For example; "Panorama" -- "all seen....!!" 000

And as far as the intellectual value of this manner of expressing numerals is concerned, is its genesis not quite natural? The Guaraní

Indians manage by means of a similar artifice, at least with some of their numerals such as "ten" or "twenty" in place of which they say "two hands" and "two hands and two feet." And it is probable that, should we analyze the etymologies of numerals among other Indians and other nations, we would find something similar. What shall we say of Roman numerals? Do they not represent as many fingers as are needed to count up to three, and a whole hand for five (V) and a hand minus a finger for four (IV), and two superimposed hands -- one being inverted -- for the (X)? It is quite clear that Roman written numerals are to Arabic numerals what hieroglyphs are to writing and what Mataco numeral expression is to the spoken tongue.

It is precisely from nature that man must first have derived the first instruments for expressing his needs and for the development of his ideas.

Chapter XI

Pronouns and Pronominal Particles (1)

1. Interpolated chapter.

a. Personal Pronouns

The most commonly used personal pronouns are the following:

	Singular	Plural
1.	I - no-j-lam	1. We - no-j-lam-il; no-j-lam-ass (dual?)
2.	Thou - ám, hám	2. You (familiar form) am-il and am-ass (dual?)
3.	This one - tój	3. Those ones toj-ess.

I also have come upon inat, inená and innamáss as plural first person pronouns.

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b. Pronominal Particles

These particles are prefexed to nouns and verbs in every case where the state or action refers to persons; which is why they are so frequently encountered, to the extent that in a dialogue there is hardly a word to which they are not affixed. This phenomenon, added to the elision to which their vowels fall heir when brought into contact with the vowels of the words which they precede, often produces the illusion that they are part of the root of those words.

These particles are as follows in singular and plural, for nouns and verbs:

1st My (singular object), My (plural object), Our (singular object) Our (plural object), I and Us: no, nu, ni, na.

2nd Thy (singular object), Thy (plural object), Your (familiar plural form with singular object), Your (familiar plural form with plural object), Thou and You (objective) -- a, ha.

3rd Of his, of theirs, that one, those ones -- lo, lu, le.

In addition to these particles of relation they customarily use others which are also prefixed to a given word root and which give the absolute or general meaning to the expression. The particles are more frequently t and l, and often la. For example: "flame of fire" is itoj-cúáca; "flame" (in general) is la-cúáca; "hut door" is huet-pè, while "door" (in general) is la-pé or hla-pé.

c. Demonstrative Pronouns

Singular	Plural
This one -- Toj	These ones -- Toj ess
and Toj-tzi,	and Toj-ess-tzí,
Toj-chí	Toj-ess-chi
and Toj-quí.	and Toj-ess-quí
That one yonder -- Toj-licné	These ones yonder -- Toj-ess-licné
That one -- Toj-láni and Toj-léc-tí	Those ones -- Toj-ess

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In combination, toj or toj-ess precede and tzí, etc., licné, laní etc., follow the word or phrase.

d. Interrogative Pronouns

Who? -- adhéj or âdéj.
What? -- atde or hat dezu. [260]

e. Reflexive Pronouns

J-lam -- suffixed -- meaning "same," (the Latin met) is used as personal pronoun and is the root element in the adverbs j-lam-mej, which means "always."

Chapter XII

Regarding Verbs

a. General Observations

The verbs are the really difficult elements in this language to nail down. I confess my ignorance; I cannot even point out an infinitive, an infinitive that is, which I can be absolutely sure is an infinitive. It might be, if I had sufficient time, that I could get to the bottom of the problem but I just do not have enough time to work on it at present. I must add, however, in defense of my good name, that the fault does not lie entirely with my limited intelligence but rather is in greater part due to the many intricacies of this wretched language and to the absolute lack of even the vaguest idea of grammatical forms on the part of my Indian interpreters. When, for example, one asks them how to say "to eat," they are at a loss for an answer, or else give a different answer every time they are confronted with the question. One must ask them how to say "I want to eat," and then "let's eat" and in this way lead them gently to the basic question. And then one comes up against a solid wall,

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for "to eat" together with "to want" is expressed by a special form which includes both ideas. And so it goes.

And then there are the different forms and ways of saying things. For instance, Spanish for yo tengo ("I have") reproduces the French c'et a moi and the Latin id est mihi, and one must run the risk of saying that es ("is") means tengo ("have"). Well, it seems that these Indians have some of these idiomatic expressions too.

And what will the reader think if I say that I have not even been able to discover the plural of verbs? There is a particle en or hen, according to the ending of the word which precedes it, which undoubtedly expresses plurality, but I do not know whether it is a pronominal particle or rather a real verbal inflection. For example: "dance" [singular, imperative--Translator] is catin and "dance" [plural, imperative--Translator] is catinén. So far so good, but let us look further -- "let us dance" is inát-catin, in which the en has become lost and inát meaning "we," has appeared, but in an analogous case this does not happen at all -- for instance: "touch" [singular, imperative--Translator] is hen quié, while "let us touch," is inénhequién, in which there are a number of changes for reason of euphony and pronunciation ease [261] but among which there can easily be distinguished, in the background, the en which had disappeared in "let us dance." This, in itself, would not be a serious problem for it might mean only that there were two plural forms. The real trouble lies in that if we combine the example with subject and object we notice that hen or en agrees with the object and not with the subject, the verb never taking on a passive or neuter quality as happens with certain Latin verbs such as videor, loquor, etc.

For example: "kill [imperative, singular--Translator] the sheep (sing.)" is l-lón tzonatáj; "Peter has killed the sheep (sing.)" is Peiló ilón tzonataj; "Peter has killed the sheep (plural) is Peiló ilonén tzonatáss. Where now is the rule which required the particle en in "dance" (imperative, plural), "let us dance," etc.? This type of confusion crops up dozens of times.

Another confusing example: iloje means to cure; iil means "the sick (one)" but in order to render "the Indians are curing the sick" into the Mataco language one must say uicquiei ilojeje tojiil-nen. Where does the "rule of incorporation" begin and where does it end in this sentence?

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So all I can say with any certainty is that en and hen are more often than not found in conjunction with plurality. I say more often than not because it is not always so. For example: "The whites have killed a sheep" is Tsiguuéle tzonataj. Apparently this plural construction with en is not used with the verb except when the object of the action of that verb is plural, or when the plural subject of the verb is one which receives the verb's action, as for instance in "to dance." This seems to indicate that in the syntax of these verbs there is a great difference when compared to ours. There is possibly a similarity in some chases to English verbal usage -- i.e., "I am told," "We are told" etc., in place of "They have told me," "They have told us," which is analogous, after all to the Latin neuter in videor, etc.

b. Regarding Tenses

To judge from the welter of verb forms which I have before me I think I can give assurance that this language has many conjugations. On this score it would be similar to Guaraní, which also has many, and would be very different from the Araucano language, which has only one, and also from the Quichua which likewise, or so it seems to me, has only one -- though an extremely complicated one in compound tenses.

From all the foregoing the reader will gather that I cannot possibly present one or more types of verb conjugations because I have not been able to describe them. Despite this, however, I am in a position to give some forms for a few of the tenses.

One of the more exact of these is the future, which is expressed by means of the present plus a final syllable la. For example: "he returns" is tapil, while "he will return" is tapil-la. This is what might be called the absolute future, for there is another future which I shall call the dubitative and which is formed with the addition of pbiye, which means "may be," this being added at the end. The lá future form is also used to [262] connote duty or obligation to do something, which is also true of our language.

Another form is the past, which consists of adding é to the present form preceded by a repetition of the last letter of the present tense form -- for it is one of this language's idiosyncracies to repeat certain letters, as is done in Italian and so many others, with the

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exception of Spanish. Example: "he arrives" is yom, while "he has arrived" is yommé.

The remote past or preterite, however, is formed by placing the adverb of time náji or náje next to the present, the n being replaced by another letter, usually l, if it falls pleasantly on the ear. For example: "he kills" is ilóm, while "he killed" (preterite) is ilonnaje. Sometimes aje alone is added, as for instance: "he eats"--théuccue, "he ate" -- théu quáje.

Another way of forming the immediate past (which almost corresponds to the imperfect) is by adding nenna, which they use either whole or else reduced to one or other of its two syllables according to the speakers personal whim.

These two words náje and nénna are the same ones which are used in the word "yesterday" -- icuala-náje and "today" -- icuala-nenná; (see how logical these savages are), and, as is the case with the future lá, are set off from the verbal element proper in order to allow for the addition of some infix or other, which may even be a whole phrase.

c. Regarding Personal Flections

It would seem, to judge from the above examples, as if the language of these Indians were totally lacking in verbal endings which had anything to do with persons, although they are -- to a certain extent -- related to number by means of the suffix en. However, be it because of a merely casual pronunciation difference, be it intentional and related to the person of the verb, the fact is that I find the e changed to i in the first person of the past tense in the following examples: "I arrived" -- yammi; "I returned" -- tapini; "I ate" (remote past or preterite) -- tdeucquáji. But it happens anyway, that these changes in verbs to agree with the person concerned are not needed for each has a pronominal prefix attached to it, to wit: nu, a, lo, inat, which correspond to "I," "thou," "he," "we," etc., which undergo certain variations such as: no and ni, lu and li, inné, and I don't remember which others.

However, in negative usage, which is formed with the suffix tde, meaning "no," the word seems to take on a sort of flectional form, but this is to be attributed solely to the desire for euphony. For example: "I see" -- nu huenn; "I do not see" -- nu-huenni-tdé, instead of nuhenntdé; "short" is isset or nissét while "not short" is

nu yissti tdé, rather than nuissetde; "is he dead?" is yáj iil?, and "he is not dead" is yini tde, instead of yill tdé. 172 173

I do not go into further details because I would continually find it necessary to become embroiled in forms about which very little is known as to their differentiations -- and these variations become all the more numerous as the [263] relations which are treated become more complex. Let us take a single example, and that from among the more elementary ones. "Did the Chief (mine) return?" is Yaj tapil-le nucaunía?; "He did not return" -- Tapini-tdé. In this very simple example, why do we have in one instance le, and in the other ni? The interrogative is concerned only with the first part, that is, with yaj. In my opinion it is quite clear that these changes are the result of an aural whim, and I believe that I can almost say that tapil-le is a substitution caused by the nu which follows tapilné, which is in turn a syncopation of tapil-nenná; and so also with tapi ni. Now ab uno disce omnes.

d. Regarding Reflexive Verbs

They seem to form some reflexive verbs by juxtaposing j-lam to the active form. For example: "Pedro killed himself" is Peiló tilonne j-lam. This j-lam translates the Latin met and our own "--self." So the personal pronoun nojlam could be "ego met," that is, "I myself," which would cause it to harmonize more closely with the other pronominal elements. I must make clear here that my references, both here and elsewhere, to Latin are not efforts to establish any sort of analogy whatsoever -- I only do so in an effort to make my report more clear.

e. Regarding Verbs in General

It is worthwhile noting how certain verbs whose meaning has become modified keep to their original root. For example: "to walk" is opil, "to return" is tapil; "to come" is nom, "to arrive" is yom; "to die" is iil, "to kill" is ilón; "to shout, call out, say" is ohn, to speak hon and hon-quié (that is "to speak with") corresponds to our "to converse," which is one more proof, in my opinion,

of the Indians' quick wit and logical inclination. These expressions could give us the key to the modifying value of certain particles, from which much would be gained regarding the philosophy of language (as in hon-quié) and comparative philology, as in ta-pil, in which t represents repetition of an action -- as retracing one's steps does indeed imply -- and which is found with this meaning in the Araucano language, and, for that matter in ours also as for instance agitar [meaning "to shake" or "agitate"--Translator] from agere, and the Italian seguitare ["To follow"--Translator] which is seguir in Spanish; and there are dozens of other examples.

However, it is by means of postpositions that the vast majority of verbs are formed. We have already given the examples tol-l-ca, "to come from"; tol-l-pe, "to fall from," tol-l-equíote "to fall into," all of which are derived from tol-l, a word of movement. And I am positive that, according to this rule, if I were to say toll-quie (quie is the same as cum -- "with," as in "company") in place of "to accompany" or "to go with," these Indians would understand me. Further examples: "Peter is dying of hunger" is Peilo il-lej nainló (ej means "with" in an instrumental sense). And in order to [264] convince the reader that ej in this case is not a preposition of nainló, "hunger," let us see the following example: "The Indians are dying of hunger" is Uicquii yil ej-i-én nainló, that is yille-ej-én, in which ej precedes en, a suffix of the plural verb which is, naturally, attached and suffixed to the latter and not prefixed to the noun. It is therefore not a "preposition" as we shall call it when we study this part of speech.

This type of preposition usage, together with the other changes and variations of which we have so often complained, is not the least of the causes which make for confusion and difficulty in the study of verbs. And in actual fact, what activities can escape the possibility of being expressed by a verb which covers the basic idea and a postpositional particle which assigns a relation to it? Very few indeed. And very few also are the words which do not have one or other of these disguised insertions which crop up now here, now there, now somewhere else and in a different guise, according to the aural requirements of the moment, and which flabbergast the hearer and surprise and confuse him with their inexplicable changes and variations.

One of the verbal forms for expressing actions which include the idea of possession is that of placing ya next to the word which

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expresses the thing possessed. For example: "woman" is chiecua, "to have a woman (or wife)" is chiecuaya; "fear" is huái', "to be afraid (to have a fear)" is huáya. Another way of indicating possession is as follows: "son" is loss, while "to have sons" is lo lessen; "daughter" is either lo-se or le-ctza, and "to have daughters" is lolessés; "brother" is quiilaj, and "to have brothers" is quiilaliss.

The verb "to be" is not expressed. For example: "I am ugly" is nu-tzi-tdé, which literally means "I goodlooking not."

d. Examples of Verbal Flections

I shall put an end to this very boring matter of the verbs (it has been so for me, I must confess, although I hope it has not for the reader!) by attempting to put together and set down one of the verb conjugations for the indicative mood. I do not guarantee the details -- you already know why -- but I believe that in general it may be accepted as summing up what I know on the subject.

VERB: Ilon -- "to kill."

INDICATIVE MOOD

	Present Tense	Remote Past (Preterite)
Singular:	1. I kill -- nu-ilón	1. I killed -- nu-ilon-náje
	2. Thou killest -- há-ilon	2. Thou killedest -- ha-ilon-náje.
	3. He kills -- l-ilón	3. He killed -- l-ilon-náje or t-ilon-náje
[265]		
Plural:		
	1. We kill - inat-ilón-én	1. We killed -- inat-ilonnajién
	2. You kill -- há-ilon-en	2. You killed -- ha-ilonnajién
	3. They kill -- tojéss-ilon-én	3. They killed -- tojéss-ilonnajién.

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IMPERFECT TENSE

Singular: 1. I was killing -- nu-ilonnénna
2. Thou wert killing -- ha-ilonnénna
3. He was killing -- l-ilonnénna

Plural: 1. We were killing -- inat-ilonnénnahén
2. You were killing -- ha-ilonnénnahén
3. They were killing -- tojéss-ilonnénnahén.

PAST PERFECT

Singular: 1. I have killed -- nu-ilonné
2. Thou hast killed -- ha-ilonné
3. He has killed -- le-ilonné
Plural: 1. We have killed -- inat-ilonnehén
2. You have killed -- ha-ilonnehén
3. They have killed -- tojéss-ilonnehén

FUTURE

Singular: 1. I shall kill -- nu-ilón-lá
2. Thou wilt kill -- ha-ilón-lá
3. He will kill -- l-ilón-lá
Plural: 1. We shall kill -- inát-ilon-lá-hen
2. You will kill -- ha-ilon-lá-hen
3. They will kill -- tojéss-ilon-lá-hen.

IMPERATIVE

kill - l-lon.

Let it be understood that the preterite form with náje is used only very rarely, and even less so is the nenná form used.

Do these people have a passive form to their verbs? I don't know. Yet I have noticed that many of the constructions using the passive in the Romance languages are changed about by them

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and rendered into an active form, or at least an intransitive one.

For example: instead of saying "Paul was killed by Pliny," they say "Pliny died because of Paul [sic]" or else "Pliny killed Paul."

I don't think, really, that this necessarily points up an inferiority in their language.

By no means let it be thought that the verbs in this language are easy and simple by virtue of the above conjugation table. It is, in fact, just because they are so jumbled and involved that I am not able to give further moods or tenses, which are so terribly complicated that even now I do not have a firm grasp of their governing rules.

Chapter XIII

Regarding Adverbs

There are a great many adverbs, but those involving time stand out because of the logical manner of their formation which parallels the way in which we form them in our own language. For example: "day" is icuála, which actually means "sun" or "one sun," just as "month" is igüeláj, which literally means "moon"; "beside" [266] is tem-ló; náje, náji or naj mean "past," and also "afterward," in the sense of past time; nenna and na mean "present, now" -- so (quite logically) "today" is icuálanná, that is "present sun"; Spanish mañana is icuála and also quiicuála, in the same way that in Spanish mañana means both "morning" and "tomorrow"; "yesterday" is icuálannáje, that is "the past sun"; "the day before yesterday is icuála el-láje, which means -- since el means "other" and láje is the same as náje -- "the other past sun." Because of some change or harmonious feeling or custom in the language, "the day after tomorrow" is tem-lo icuála, which signifies "beside tomorrow." It is curious that tem-ló is prefixed to icuála to express the idea of a day later and yet náje is suffixed when expressing the idea of a day earlier. Quirks of the language apparently, and yet they must answer to some etymological, not to say philosophical, reason, which resides in their changed position.

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What further attracts my attention is the following: Instead of our "night" they use a word which means "earth," that is, hunát hunná, just as for "day" they make use of their word for "sun," as if they had intended to oppose one to the other. It may not be too farfetched to see in this a sort of philosophy in which the earth and the sun represent two opposite principles: darkness and light, good and evil. I, however, have not been able to perceive any such philosophy in their ideology, although it is true that something of this sort -- somewhat materialized -- is to be found in their religion, as we have had occasion to see in an earlier section of this treatise.

And is this business of using the sun, or light, to express the idea of time not an intellectual parallel or approach to the Aryan, for from the Sanscrit dyu, that is "light" [Spanish luz--Translator] came the Latin dies, the Spanish día, and the Italian di, all of which mean "day" or "day's effort."

Meanwhile, in order to say "this afternoon" they say hunná and quiá-hunná, and for "last night," hunná-tzi-nná, keeping thus to the same form and sequence followed in the order of words which we saw in "today," "tomorrow," etc.

Furthermore, their expression for "sky" is ppe-lé, which must 192
be translated as "that which is above," from ppé, "above" and lé 821
which is a contraction of lél-lé or c-lel-lé, a patronimic word which is used to express the concept of origin, provenience, fatherland, etc.

It is said that savages have no abstract ideas, but I ask, is the 192
idea of "always" or "never" abstract or not? Without waiting for an 196
answer I say that these Indians in question have the word inne-mid which expresses "never," and c-lam-mej for "always," which they derive, respectively, from innem -- "more" (Italian mai, Latin umquam) and the negative d; and from j-lam, meaning "same" plus the postposition ej.

It may be objected these are expressions made up of words which separately mean something more limited, which is valid as far as the objection goes. The French, let it be remembered [267] say toujours, "all the days," with the meaning of "always" and thus express an idea which is indefinite, or rather infinite, by means of a word which of itself has a limited meaning as is the case with "day." The fact of the matter is that a given abstraction is not

limited to the words used to convey it but hinges rather on the intention behind it. If this were not so what could one say in defense of the English word "always"?

While we are on this subject let me mention that the particles naje and nenná -- the latter sometimes missing its first syllable, sometimes its last and shifting from i to e [sic] -- are used to make two verb tenses. The first, that is naje, being employed for the remote past or preterite and the other for the past perfect. For example: "to return" is tapil; "he returned" is tapil láje; "he has returned" is tapil-lé (the second l in both cases is the same as n, as was explained above in the treatment of icuála-el-láje).

In place of "midday" or "noon" they say icuála icni, which, as far as I can make out means "high sun" or "up above sun"; and in order to convey the idea of "midnight" they say hunnat-quiú-nej, which I take to mean "low earth" or "underneath earth." For "it is early" they say inataj, and for "it is late," hunáj.

They have a syllable, tde, or dthé, or ntdé, which is the basic element for a great number of adverbs of place and of time. For example: "why?" is atdyécque; "where?" is tdené; "whence?" is dtel che, "how?" is atde-tzó; "how much?" is tde-hoté; "when?" is tdé-naj-hote. Hoté alone means "as," and naj expresses the further meaning that the question refers to a somewhat remote period in the past. Let it be noted that wherever a precedes it usually refers to "thou," since the question is asked of a second person. This goes to show how important it is to know the circumstances of time (tense) and person to which the questions refer, when writing the answers.

I am afraid that I shall bore the reader with this mass of data on the Mataco language, and yet I do not know, for the life of me how to keep from telling that little which I have been able to learn of it and gather in the limited free time allowed me by my professional work and which usually comes only in the very late hours of the night. If I make digressions to keep the reader from becoming tired I fear that I shall write too lengthily, and if I make no digressions and write a straight report I fear to be too dry and boring.... Certainly I know not which way to turn. Who will suggest some bright idea which will afford escape from this slough? No one?

Then we must remain in it. But then, my dear reader, if there is still one whom I can call thus, be benevolent to me and my unfortunate work. I beg you for the sake of the love I have for you and of the love I hope you have for me... because of those hours I have stolen from Morpheus while thinking of you and trying to untangle the most intricately intertwined Mataco mesh which has been until now virgin; and I beg you -- even by the mockery which I myself feel falls upon me as I appear to neglect the exact roots of mathematics for the last analysis, believe me, some good may [268] come from all this at a time when you may wish to study a little of the prehistoric history of this people to be found here in South America -- for with the tiny light afforded by philology we may well attempt to discover whether these Redskins were at least as closely related to each other as we are to the Croats. And if this is not reason enough for you..... miserere mei.

Chapter XIV

Regarding Prepositions

Prepositions in this language as in so many others make up, 193
to a great extent, the base and, so to speak, the philosophy of the language. Placed next to a verb they lend a relational meaning. And yet they are themselves so lacking in clarity and fixity that not long before writing these lines I had marvelled at the apparent paucity of prepositions in this tongue. In this language the very opposite is true of what occurs in the Quichua tongue in which prepositions are truly beautiful, set off from other words, clear, always in the same position -- that is, placed after their object, for which reason they should be called postpositions and not prepositions.

In Mataco the prepositions are also postpositions, but sometimes they are not placed immediately after the noun but after the verb, and are then often mistakenly supposed to be a form of the conjugation, which error I also fell into. Sometimes also they are placed between the verb root (if we may be allowed to use such a term here) and the flectional tense ending, or between a noun root and the ending which is indicative of plurality or case. One

can easily imagine then the horrible confusion confronting the neophyte who is faced with a pile of expressions belonging to a completely new and strange language in which a given word seems to change and be different every time it is used, and for no apparent reason. I for my part confess that for a long time I was unable to understand it and even now I own that I have been able to track down only very few of the rules which govern these changes and which lie hidden among the hundreds of sentences which I have written down. 193

For example: cue is equivalent to "with"; "we" is, in its abbreviated form nu hén; "with us" is nu cue hén. 192 193

Of course, the problem would not be difficult if one could ask an Indian a question regarding an isolated word and he were able to answer in an absolute way. But the Indian, more times than not, has need always to refer the word to some thing. Thus, when one asks him how one says "foot" in his language he will answer nuccolo if he touches his own foot; accolo if he touches the questioner's foot; toccolo if he touches the foot of some third person. Then there is the confusing problem of [269] different construction. For example: in the above mentioned case of nuccuenen, if one asks the interpreter which is the part which means "with" and which the part corresponding to "us" he will answer (if he is intelligent and knows the language) quite naively: nuc means "with," and cuehen is "us" -- precisely the opposite to what is actually the case.

So it is that there is nothing for it but to go forward slowly and step by step, from the known to the unknown, inquiring first after single words, then after simple, clear sentences, then after less simple but still clear ones, and finally, by dint of repeating the same sentence with slight changes of one word or some one of its parts we shall in all probability, manage, by a simple process of elimination, to arrive at the meaning of each word. And yet even this is not enough for, owing to the properties inherent in this language which I have pointed out elsewhere, owing to the great intellectual distance between the interlocutors, and to the different points of view to which they hold because of mutual ignorance, the wretched student suddenly finds himself face to face with an old word in a new disguise, not knowing why or how or when the change came about and wondering which of the two forms is the

correct or original or basic one. His first reaction is to redouble his efforts and multiply his questions, and thus very often he only redoubles his confusion until he finally ends up by producing a veritable Babel. . . . 192 193

And since we have mentioned Babel, I must remark that the Vielas [sic] Indians translate the word "speak" by the term mbabelon.

But now let us return to our prepositions. It is often said that these prepositions modify the meaning of verbs, but it would be closer to the truth to say that they merely complement them. For example: Tol-l carries with it the idea of movement. When used alone it may mean "to sprout": thus "the grass sprouts" is expressed thus: "grass, tol-l. With the addition of ca at the end it means "to come from," and if ppé is added it means "to fall." Other words are not lacking which express the same thing, however if we want to use tol-l then these particles, which are used as postpositions, must be placed next to the nouns.

It might be supposed, when these prepositions are suffixed to verbs, that they are really prefixes of the objective case; but in spite of the fact that there are some prepositions which are prepositions in every sense of the word, nevertheless, in the above cases they act postpositionally even with verbs, because they modify the latters' endings in accord with their sound, because the verbs thus modified can be used alone -- for other words can be inserted between it (together with its postposition) and the objective case -- which demonstrates that the postposition is attached to the verb.

The main particles, or at least the one which I judge to be so, and which act as do our prepositions are: eckiá -- "until"; tamennej -- "because of"; appé, pé or ppé -- "on top of"; (h)icquió -- "below"; cue, quié, ycque, ecque, ej -- "with" (these are probably one and the same, but modified for reasons of euphony); uuith, uuitd and c-loya, which also [270] mean "with" and are prefixed and are rather to be considered copulative conjunctions; op, ob, "hot," hlot -- "for," and which I have only come across with the meaning of "because," for example: op-toj -- "because" ("for this"); op-qui-lá -- "what for?", while in order to say "why?" they use atddeyéque? which is made up of atde meaning "what" or "how" and yécque -- "with." There is also the postposition ei which is

like the Italian da and the French chez, and is used for movement to or from a place (the latter often being omitted) and is placed in diverse positions. This ei or iei is part of a most elegant verbal expression: miei, meaning "fetch," composed of móh or mmóh which means "go" and ei (the whole having undergone one of the numerous shifts which are so common to this language and used to drive me to desperation). For example: Instead of saying "go and bring me fire" (itoj) they say miéi-itoj, which is "fetch me fire." At first, and even after I had been working on the language for some time, I thought it was a flection. 192 193

Another important postposition is ca which means "of" (genitive and ablative) and is suffixed to both verbs and nouns. With these latter it forms a sort of genitive which I find is used somewhat rarely and then only with proper nouns. With personal pronouns it forms the possessives "my," "thy," "his," which in this tongue are genitive -- if they can be called such -- and follow the same rule as genitives do in Italian in which one may just as readily say "mine" as "of me." So from nu (which is a syncopated form of nojlam -- "I") they derive nujcá -- "my"; ah-ca -- "your," luh-cá -- "his," "of him."

There are other postpositions also: cquí, "within"; lája, which means "without" and is a prefix, and which is a word of negation, for I do not find it prefixed to any words other than those ending in a way which indicates denied possession. For instance, "wifeless" is lája chequó yá; that is "not married."

There are so many others that I cannot possibly recall them all.

The words that express our "with" (ecq, yc-que) lead me to believe that some postpositions govern certain cases and that the varied endings of the latter cause the apparent change in the prefix. For example, "me" is nuya; "with me" is nuyécque -- from which one can easily conclude that a shift has taken place from nuya yécque. And does not the same thing happen in Italian when instead of saying con lo, con la, con li, we say col-lo, col-la, col-li, and in place of di-lo, di-la we say del-lo, del-la?

While on this subject of postpositions, let the reader not marvel on seeing that in Mataco the order is completely different from our own. On the contrary, the shoe is on the other foot for it would be more to the point if he marvelled at our usage, for this business of suffixing the particles which we prefix must be considered as having been the universal norm at one time.

So it is that in German and in English, but especially in the former [271] the transposition of prepositions is quite frequent and is one of the elements which most contribute to language elegance -- not to speak of difficulty for those who wish to learn it starting from one of the so-called Latin group. At least the main difficulty lies there in my opinion, without mentioning the dissimilarity of the words themselves.

In Latin we have examples of prepositional transposition in the following: nobiscum, vobiscum, tecum, mecum and in the interchangeable position of such words as "versus, it being possible to say "I am going 'Romam versus' and 'versus Romam'." And this sort of usage carries over even to conjunctions so that one may say Senatus atque Populus Romanus or Senatus Populusque Romanus which has remained as Rome's famous motto. In Italian we have meco and feco to which the Spanish pleonasm con-migo and con-tigo correspond.

The examples which I have just cited can, in my opinion, be considered as vestiges of preexistant forms.

In South America's Indian languages, postpositions rather than prepositions are the order of the day, and the contrary is only an exception, at least in Quichua and Guarani, which have only postpositions, and in Araucano which makes use of both forms. The above mentioned Indians, together with the Matacos and savage Chaco and Central tribes, occupy all of South America.

May it not be that this form is more useful than ours in contributing to a quick perception of ideas, the main term being expressed first while the changeable particle is attached later? Of course, one of these small particles does not retard appreciation of the relation between the two terms very much, but nevertheless, if we go back and look at the period in which languages had their birth, does it not seem more natural to give first place to the concrete objects and only then express the relationship between them?

I think so, and all the more so since one may well believe that the phonetic symbol expressive of a relationship would naturally have come later, together with intellectual progress and, above all, with practice in the manipulation of a new instrument, which would first have leaned heavily on a convention as to the order of words and their modulation.

In this order of things, prepositions would point to a more advanced stage in the genesis of languages as compared to postpositional usage, which would in turn be an advance over mere modulation. And yet modern languages do still make use of convention and modulation to distinguish between relationships.

So, when I say: "The dog kills the tiger," I know -- it being a convention which continual usage has made commonplace -- immediately who is doing the killing [272] and who is being killed. And when I ask: "Does the tiger kill the dog?" ["Kills the tiger the dog" would be the literal translation--Translator] it is because of the same convention, and also because of the intonation, that it will be understood if it is the dog who kills the tiger or vice versa. The declension of words, although it complicates grammatical forms, helps a great deal as regards clarity and, in this regard, Spanish, which sets off the accusative with the preposition a (where people are concerned) is ahead of those languages which do not have this distinguishing element -- French uses the relative qui for the nominative and que for the accusative.

Are intonation and convention absolute elements of progress and, furthermore, is their usage prior to declensions and to the prefixing of these prepositional particles to nouns? A discussion of the problem would be very helpful. I will limit my opinion to saying that the best language is that which combines the greatest expressiveness with the most simplicity, and also that certain individualizing forms necessary for material -- for lack of a better word -- minds must have perforce given place to more simple forms which derive strength from the relative position of words once the mind became capable of perceiving relations, abstractions, and syntheses.

One language which is characterized by consciously "materializing" by means of symbols what we express by relative position and intonation is Quichua, in which there is declension of nouns and

suffixing of artificial particles in the interrogative: chu at the end of verbs, and taj at the end of nouns.

For example: "Do you want?" is munanqui? and "water" (accusative) is yacuta. If one were to ask: "Do you want water?", this would be munanquichu yacuta?; "you are called" is sutiqui, and "how" is ima. In order to ask "How (what) are you called?" one must say imataj sutiiqui, one sound -- if spoken -- or calligraphic symbol -- if written -- being economized.

Let it be noted that in Quichua all particles are suffixed, be they conjunctions, prepositions, interrogatives, declensions. This makes of it an exceptionally [sic] typical language.

Chapter XV

Regarding Conjunctions

I have not found a single disjunctive conjunction such as "or," "neither," etc. Instead of "or" they appear to use "if not," and in place of "neither" they seem to repeat the verb. For example, they say "Give me water if there is no wine" instead of "give me [273] water or wine." And also: "I have no water, I have no wine" instead of "I have neither water nor wine."

Conversely, they have many words to express copulative conjunctions such as "and," "also," etc., all of which they prefix, as we do. The more important of this type of conjunction are, it seems to me: uuith or uuitd and c-loya which they use for our "with," as has already been seen, and utcuei, isiqiei, tdéui, which correspond to our [blank left here, but probably "and" was intended--Translator].

I notice that tdéui is used especially in interrogative phrases such as: "I am leaving, and you?" -- Nu-ycque, tdeui am? They have the conditional conjunction "if," which is quiá or cquia. When a conditional proposition is placed before the main proposition, the latter is joined to uuitd, just as so is used after wenn in German, or cosi in Italian. For example: "If you do not want to, let me know" is cquia ("you do not want to") uuitd ("let me know").

Chapter XVI

(Conclusion)

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And here I put an end to this and take my leave of the reader. It is my wish, as a practical if indirect outcome of this work, (even if he has only read it piecemeal) that he become imbued with the conviction that man, during the period of his actual life, is potentially the same all over the world. We find him in all places using that complicated instrument which is language and revealing himself through it as possessing all the faculties corresponding to an intellectual maturity capable -- circumstances being favorable -- of attaining a civilized state such as that term is understood today.

If the present day Indians are hostile to civilized society, they are so only as individuals and because of habits contracted during their individual lifetimes, for they have, in spite of this hostility, a "natural" inclination toward it. Proof of this is to be found in those Indian children who have been introduced into our society and who develop in every way as one of our own children would. All this anyone who has lived among these savages will readily understand.

I do not, however, wish to deny or minimize the effects of heredity, nor to accept the fallacy that man came to the earth armed with all the faculties and tools he now has as is recounted of the famous Minerva. Far from it, but I do wish to say that compared to the long series of evolutions through which man has passed up to the present time, so-called civilization represents a mere atom be it [274] in terms of the scant years (a few thousand) which have passed since its appearance and establishment in some scattered parts of the world, or be it because of the quite limited number of individuals and nations who have actually enjoyed its fruits.

It follows also from this that even from this point of view the origin of man harks back to a remote period only hinted at by the study of fossils and of the earth, that is to say, an epoch further removed from us in terms of years than we are separated in terms of days from the Adam of Genesis.

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"Note:--The material contained in the foregoing chapters has been taken from the book Otto Mesi ["Eight Months" --Translator] in which it was set down in a hodgepodge manner and in the order in which the author had come upon it in his travels, which is only natural when one is going about with a note pad in one's hand faithfully setting down facts of interest. This order was not convenient in a work such as the present for many reasons, not the least being ease of reference. However little these Indian languages may lend themselves to rules of a sum, es, fui type, it is always best to try to explain them in grammatical terms familiar to us. Everything is conventional anyway in this realm for, except for cases such as the Volapuk, every language was first spoken and then written and only much later reduced to grammar.

The chapter dealing with pronouns was compiled from loose observations found in several chapters. The importance of this "part of speech," if we may use the term, when speaking of the Mataco language, necessitated a separate chapter, however short and unsatisfactory, in view of the fact that it is the most difficult element for every collector of vocabularies. This difficulty was the cause of the author's not having such a chapter in his original essay, a lack which we have here remedied--The Editor."

[Pages 275-350 of the Spanish text consist of a Mataco vocabulary which has not been translated into English and will be found only in category 116 with the rest of the foreign text. --Analyst]

1: Pelleschi S17 Mataco

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TOMO XVII

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[Title page]

LOS INDIOS MATACOS Y SU LENGUA

POR EL

INGENIERO JUAN PELLESCHI

CON INTRODUCCIÓN POR

SAMUEL A. LAFONE QUEVEDO M. A.

PARTE I.

Introducción Preliminar

Antes que el señor Juan Pelleschi publicase su interesante y concienzudo libro «Ocho meses en el Gran Chaco», la lengua de los Matacos era tan desconocida para todos como eran conocidas y numerosas las tribus que la hablaban. No se comprende cómo esta lengua haya podido desaparecer tan por completo, y sin dèjar ni rastro en los archivos de los Padres de la Compañía; pero el hecho es que aún á principios del siglo pasado el mismo P. Machoni se quejaba de que se hubiesen perdido ya artes y vocabularios de la lengua Tonocoté, con que yo identifico el idioma de los Mataco-Matagunyos, y que era la que los Misioneros Jesuitas empleaban para doctrinar y evangelizar á estos *Indios*.

A principios de nuestro siglo Hervas y Adelung, aquél en su «Catálogo de las Lenguas», éste en su «Mithridates», no pudieron hacer más que nombrar la lengua, como para hacer constar que sabían que existía, pero se lamentaban de no haber podido conseguir ni un solo dato, ni siquiera un *Pater Noster* con que ilustrar su escasísima noticia de este interesante grupo de idiomas hablados por innumerables indios, (es decir por Indios del Chaco). Verdad es que más tarde el sabio viajero francés Alcides d'Orbigny, condujo á Francia un corto, aunque útil vocabulario del Vejoz, dialecto de los Matacos del río de Zeta ó de Oran; más este per-

maneció perdido entre los papeles de aquel autor en la Biblioteca Nacional de Paris hasta que de allí lo desenterró el señor Luciano Adam, quien tuvo la amabilidad de remitírmelo á Pilciao.

Sin noticia alguna de lo que era ó podía ser la lengua de los Indios Matacos, y sin preocupación alguna acerca de ellos y de su lengua, resuelto á darse cuenta de lo que viese y oyese, entró el ingeniero señor Juan Pelleschi al Chaco de la manera que él tan pintorescamente describe, coronando su obra con la parte lingüística, en que descubría de *nuevo* (permítaseme la expresión) el idioma de los *Utcquii*, á quienes nosotros damos el apodo de Matacos y Mataguayos. El autor se desnuda de toda idea preconcebida acerca de las reglas gramaticales á lo *sum, es, fuit*, y apunta lo que oye, no una, sino mil veces, hasta darse cuenta á qué parte de la oración, según nuestro modo de pensar, pertenecía el vocablo de que se trataba y sus accidentes. En el mismo orden que él los descubrió los ha apuntado en las notas de viaje, de suerte que el señor Pelleschi nos hace partícipes de sus descubrimientos y podemos gozar con él en cada nuevo hallazgo.

Desgraciadamente para nosotros el libro fué escrito en italiano. Había muerto ya el doctor José María Gutierrez, amigo del autor y de todas estas cosas, y le faltó quien le diese bombo á este trabajo, que era sin embargo una revelación para el estudio de las Lenguas Argentinas, así es que el libro permaneció entre las curiosidades de los bibliófilos, y, entre tantos otros, del general Mitre, á quien debo mi primera introducción á este meritorio é interesantísimo trabajo.

Luego que leí el libro resolví entablar relación con su autor, porque en media hora comprendí que esa clase de noticias solo se escriben con abundantes notas y apuntes á la vista, y me daba cuenta de un lamentable vacío, que era la falta de un vocabulario que le sirviese de base y de complemento al Ensayo Gramatical de los últimos capítulos.

No fué obra de romanos encontrar un amigo común, y en 1889 di principio á una relación que me ha proporcionado muchos ratos de verdadero placer y aprovechamiento.

Excusado es decir que en seguida de los primeros saludos y cortesías, entramos *in medias res* y que el señor Pelleschi me facilitó sus carteras, de las que extracté las tres cuartas partes de su contenido antes de retirarme á mi casa de Pilciao, en Andalga-

lá de Catamarca. Puesto allí, con mi ayudante y secretario Ramón Martinez nos pusimos á la tarea de coordinar é invertir los vocabularios y fraseología, con la mira de hacer una publicación de lo reunido, siempre con el beneplácito del dueño de los apuntes.

De tiempo en tiempo nos veíamos, con éste, y cuando nos hallábamos distantes, nos escribíamos; yo le animaba á que publicase algo más, pero él prometía hacerlo para cuando se hallara menos atareado. Más tarde nos vimos arrastrados por los acontecimientos político-comerciales de los años 1889 á 1893, y solo muy de tarde en tarde podíamos volver al asunto que tanto nos interesaba. Por fin en Abril del último año, á ratos perdidos, y en medio de otras preocupaciones que de todo tendrían menos de lingüística, pude concluir mi bosquejo del trabajo que ahora se publica, con la introducción más ó menos como ella sale á luz en este estudio, pero la parte de Pelleschi, con menoscabo de esa cuarta parte que no había copiado aún.

Los manuscritos fueron dirijidos todos á mi amigo el señor Pelleschi, y éste me hizo notar el vacío que existía en lo que le mandaba.

La crísis del 90 y las consiguientes perturbaciones en el Museo de La Plata, habían impedido la publicación de mis trabajos sobre lingüística en la Revista de aquella institución, y, con tal motivo, quedó retenido todo mi material, y con él, nuestro Mataco. Pelleschi tambien tenía atenciones de preferente importancia, trabajos ferro-carrileros, etc. El año 1893 el señor J. B. Ambrosetti, á nombre del Boletin del Instituto Geográfico, nos ofreció las páginas de esa valiosa publicación, y se continuó la tarea de dar á luz el material acopiado sobre Lenguas Argentinas. El programa debía ser éste: Lule Tonocoté de Machoni, el Vilela según Pelleschi y otros, y el grupo Mataco Mataguayo, empezándose éste con el trabajo de Pelleschi.

Cuando le llegó el turno á este último, Pelleschi pidió más tiempo, y así el manuscrito quedó encarpetado.

Quizo la casualidad que en el ínterin, se me proporcionaran tres muy importantes documentos, referentes tanto á nuestro Mataco, como al boliviano, y no hubo más remedio que utilizarlos para llenar el vacío que nos dejaba la falta del trabajo de Pelleschi. El primero de aquellos resultó de una correspondencia con los PP. del Convento Franciscano de Tarija, y se publicó en este mismo

Boletin bajo el nombre de «Nocten», por el P. Inocencio Massei; el segundo fué el MS ya referido de d'Orbigny; y el tercero, el Mataco del P. Remedi, del Convento de Salta. Todos estos trabajos tienen su orígen en los apuntes de los Padres Misioneros de la Orden Seráfica, y son de gran valor, porque nacen de una permanencia prolongada entre los indios, y el indio, con tal ó cual reserva en materia de «abusiones», (1) como ellos las llaman, se dá más con el que viste la jergu de San Francisco que con cualquier otro cristiano.

Estas monografías, conforme salían, se mandaban al señor Pelleschi, tanto porque era un deber de la estrecha amistad que nos liga, cuanto porque pudiesen servir, como las memorias de La Madrid en el caso de las de Paz, (2) para precipitar su trabajo sobre el mismo tema. Diga lo que quiera mi amigo, tiene que confesar que estos opusculos le inspiraron, y él por su parte al comparar los cobró confianza, al ver lo bien que había oido, discurrido y apuntado.

El resultado de todo fué que nos empeñamos para este año de 1896, en que regresaba él de Europa y yo bajaba á Buenos Aires de mi morada en el Valle de Londres. Reunidos ambos en esta ciudad nos dedicamos á nuestro asunto ocupando de ocho á diez horas por semana durante cuatro meses, hasta entregar el manuscrito para su publicación.

Con razón Pelleschi rehuia la tarea de entenderse solo con sus apuntes: no porque no fuese capaz de hacerlo si se propusiese, sino porque es cosa séria copiar vocablos como estos y distribuirlos como corresponde sin ayuda inteligente en la materia, donde todas son dificultades y dudas para el que no tenga algún principio.

Una á una han sido revisadas las palabras, se ha aumentado ese veinticinco por ciento que faltaba, se han designado los Indios de quienes se apuntaron las voces y frases con una inicial que los distingue, y se han traducido de nuevo en forma de arte, pero bajo la corrección del autor, los apuntes sueltos de los «Otto Mesi». Esto se imponía para la facilidad de referencia

Puedo decir que uno y otro hemos trabajado con amor, y ahora que nos separamos, despues de haber concluido la obra, me parece que renuevo el sentimiento que experimentaba cuando me separaba de mis compañeros de Universidad en los años felices que

(1) Supersticiones.

(2) Según me lo refirió el doctor Andrés Lamas.

pasé en Cambridge. Yo no puedo dedicar este trabajo á Pelleschi, ni él á mí; pero no se opondrá él á que uno y otro se lo dediquemos á la memoria del malogrado Larsen, *pioneer* en estas cosas, y es primero que hizo conocer la obra de Pelleschi en este país.

SAMUEL A. LAFONE QUEVEDO.

Buenos Aires, Noviembre 3 de 1896.

REFERENCIAS HISTÓRICAS

I.

Asegurar que los Matacos ó Mataguayos se presentan por primera vez á la historia en los escritos de los Padres Misioneros, sería exponernos á ser corregidos más tarde cuando conozcamos mejor los archivos de la madre patria. Careciéndose empero de tales datos, y sin tener á la mano la obra del Padre Salinas, debo empezar con lo que dice el P. Techo en su historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay.

Años 1590, 1591 y 1592. Lib. I en Cap. 40 á 43 etc.—Ed. Lat.

En el primero de estos años llegan los PP. Pedro Añasco y Juan Fonte al Tucuman, mientras el famoso y apostólico P. Alonso Bárcena evangelizaba á los Lules, los de las faldas del Anconquija, no los del P. Machoni. Aquel benemérito Padre trabajaba sin cesar entre aquellos belicosos indios, mal comido y en peligro inminente de perder la vida, más no por eso desmayaba, antes al contrario, llamado bajo obediencia por el Superior contestó en estas sentidas y nobles palabras:

«Adero quam primum, O Pater, et pedibus tuis advolatus dicam, Ecce ego, mitte me, sive ad Lullos me redire, sive ad Calchaquinos, Chaquenses aut Frontones, vel últimos mundi terminos ire me jusseris: nam insatiabili desiderio eó me mitti cupio, ubi extrema omnia pro lucrandis animis pati possim.» C. 40.

«Acudiré cuanto antes, Padre, y cabe tus pies volando diré: — Aquí estoy yo; envíame, ya sea que mandes que me vuelva á los Lules, ya que vaya yo á los Calchaquies, á los Chaquenses, ó Frontones, ó sea á los últimos confines de la tierra, porque deseo con insaciable anhelo que se me mande allí donde pueda sufrir hasta lo último en pró de las almas que hayan de salvarse.»

Aquí se vé que el buen Padre distinguía entre Lules, Calchaquies, Chaquenses y Frentones. En mi concepto los Chaquenses eran los Mataraes, Matacos ó Mataguayos que hablaban el Tonocoté.

II.

La gente de Matará.

En su capítulo 41 el P. Techo pasa á contar como los españoles fundaron la ciudad de la Concepción del Bermejo, á 30 leguas de su desagüe en el Paraguay, con el objeto de reducir las innumerables tribus que la rodeaban. Estos se estimaban al rededor de cien mil almas, y fueron los PP. Fonte y Angulo sus doctrinantes. Casi todas las parcialidades eran de las que se apellidaban Frentonas, nombre que correspondía á la calvicie artificial que se producían, rapándose la parte anterior de la cabeza.

Estos indios colgaban clavas y puñados de flechas del cinto, y cargaban un bordon ó báculo erizado de mandíbulas de pescado como sierras. Marchaban desnudos, con el cuerpo pintado para inspirar terror. Eran muy celosos de sus fronteras, y para escarmiento colgaban de los árboles los cadáveres de los enemigos que mataban. Eran nómades, y trasportaban sus campamentos de una parte á otra.

«Singulæ ferme factiones diversis inter se linguis utuntur, adeó notabili varietate, ut in utroque fluminis Rubri littore octona idiomata computentur: nec aliud ferme erudiendæ genti magis obstat, quam ea linguarum varietas.»

Casi cada parcialidad usa diferente lengua, y á tal grado llega esta variedad, que á uno y otro márgen del Rio Bermejo hasta ocho idiomas se pueden contar. Y no hay cosa que más obstaculice la enseñanza de la gente, que esa variedad de lenguas.

Muchos de estos indios debieron ser de los que nosotros llamamos Matacos, sin que por eso tengan que resultar Frentones: porque Techo dice:—*Porro gentem ferme hanc omnem ideo Frontones Hispani vocabant*, lo que equivale á decir que *casi*, pero *no todos*, eran Frentones. Que Matacos debieron ser algunos se deduce del fin del capítulo 41:

"Sed Barsena et Agnascus Tucumaniæ fines egressi ad Concepcionis urbem pervenerant, in Mataranorum oppido sedem stabilem habituri, et inde, prout res ferret ad debellandos Frontenum animos excursuri." 41 ad fin.

Empero Barcena y Añasco despues de salir del territorio del Tucuman, habian llegado á la ciudad de la Concepcion, con la intención de establecerse en el pueblo de los *Matardes;* y de allí, según las circunstancias lo permitiesen, poder hacer sus entradas para conquistarse las voluntades de los Frentones.

Aquí está claro que los documentos que el P. Techo tuvo á la vista distinguían perfectamente entre Matarães y Frentones, como que aquellos eran Matacos y estos Guaycurúes, i. e., Tobas, Mocovíes, Abipones., etc.

III.

Descripción de los Matarães—Cap. 42. Año 1591.

Por muchas razones conviene reproducir aquí el texto latino:

"Matarangorum gens, præ vicinis populis, est longé docilis. Hos, promore Barbarorum sparsim incolentes, in unum oppidum Alfonsus Vera, Conceptionis fundator et Prætor, contraxerat, feceratque, ut plerique Baptismum perciperent. Sed, pervogato malo, primos sacrorum Ministros nacti fuerunt planè ineptos, adeó initialia christianorum mysteria penitus ignorarent. Neophyti omnes sacram confessionem, post susceptum baptisma, nunquam usurparant. Ex septem fermé incolarum millibus complures supererant baptizandi vel infantes, vel adulti. Conditio veró loci nihilo hominibus lætior erat; nam sòlum ea aqua bibebatur quæ passim luto mixta corruptáque in fossis manu ductis, cœlo pluente, excipiebatur. Pro omni cibatu triticum turcicum et cucurbitæ erant. Sed ea hominum locorumque calamitas Socios, multa pati et ardua facere pro Christo ambientes, exhilarabant magis, quam deprimebant: qui, partitis inter se laboribus, Tonocotanæ linguæ beneficio, brevi effecêre, ut ex tanto numero nullus in oppido restaret Ethnicus, aut pellicatu infamis; nullas avitas superstitiones usurparet; nullus Dominicis festique diebus abesse ab Concione et Catechisi auderet. Plerique jam frequenter exhomologesi se purgabant, hebdomadatim in se flagro sœviebant, Corpori Christi magno pietatis sensu communicabant: pendebant omnes ab ore Magistrorum, privatis publicisque colloquiis solita veteribus Christianis exercitia, pro captu gentis, insinuantium."

La nación de los *Matardes*, comparadas con las demás tribus vecinas es muy mansa. A estos, que según costumbre de los Bárbaros vivían desparramados, hizo reducir á un pueblo Alonso Vera, fundador de la Concepción y Adelantado, é hizo que los más recibiesen el bautismo. Habiendo empero cundido el mal, les tocó en suerte primeros Ministros de los Sacramentos á todas luces incapaces, al grado que ignoraban de todo punto hasta los misterios elementales de las cosas cristianas. Despues de recibido el bautismo, ni uno de los Neófitos jamás había hecho necesaria la santa confesión. Entre casi siete mil habitantes quedaban muchos por bautizarse, ya párvulos, ya adultos. Las conveniencias del lugar empero en nada eran muy agradables para el hombre; porque solo esa agua que se bebía, encenagada y abombada de aquí y allí, cuando llovía se recogía en pozos escarbados á mano. El maiz y zapallos les servía de toda comida. Más esa calamidad de hombres y lugares, el sufrir mucho, y emprender cosas difíciles por Cristo, más bien alegraban y no desconcertaban á los de la Compañía, que andaban en tal empeño. Y ellos repartiéndose entre sí las tareas, valiéndose de la lengua *Tonocoté*, en poco tiempo lograron, que en tan numeroso gentio, no quedase en el pueblo un solo gentil ni tildado de amancebado; que nadie acudiese á la superstición de los abuelos, que nadie los Domingos y días de fiesta se atreviese á ausentarse de la Plática ni doctrina. Los más con frecuentes confesiones quedaban libres de culpa y pena, semanalmente se disciplinaban con rigor, con la mayor reverencia al Cuerpo de Cristo hacian su comunión: todos estaban á la voz de Maestros que les enseñaban en conferencias públicas y privadas los ejercicios acostumbrados por cristianos viejos, para la edificación de la gente.

A todo se prestaban los mansos Matarães. Y mientras evangelizaban los buenos Padres á estos dóciles catecúmenos, duplicaban sus tareas por otro lado, como lo cuenta el P. Techo en su capítulo 43:

"Sed is labor nullus erat, si conferretur cum eo, qui a Patribus sumebatur in discendis variarum linguarum a Frontonibus usitatarum idiotismis: nam cùm præsertim Frontonum causâ venissent, necesse erat linguas eorum priùs nosse quàm possent utilitatem aliquam adferre. Itaque sesquiennali spatio Alfonsus Barsena, sexaginta quinque annorum senex, insatiabili animarum Christo lucrandarum desiderio flagrans, communicatis cum Petro Agnasco studûs, Guaranicam, Naticam, Quisoquinam, Abiponicam, Quiranguicam, linguas didicit. Vocabulariis, Rudimentis, Catechismis, et Concionibus, ad earum usum compositis: cùm tamem, antequam uterque è Tucumaniâ discederent, Tonocotanam, Kakanam, Paquinam, Quirandicam ad præcepta et lexica eo fine reduxissent, ut Sociis in partem laborum venturis facilitatem ad eas perdiscendas adferrent. Atque ut latiùs utilitas serperet, Petrus Agnascus pleraque omnia ab Alfonsus Barsena præsertim composita, elegantissimo caractere pluries transcripsit, transcriptaque publici juris fecit."

Pero ese trabajo nada era, si se compara con el otro emprendido por los Padres al ponerse en el empeño de aprender los dialectos de las varias lenguas habladas por los Frentones; porque siendo ante todo los Frentones la causa de su venida, por necesidad tenian que saber las lenguas de estos antes de poderles ser de alguna utilidad. Asi pues, en el trascurso de año y medio, Alonso Barcena, un viejo de 65 años, enardecido con el deseo de ganar almas para Cristo, compartiendo sus estudios con Pedro Agnasco, aprendió las lenguas Guarany, Natica, Quisoquina, Abipona, Quiranguica, habiéndose confeccionado Vocabularios, Artes, Doctrinas y Pláticas para el uso respectivo: con ser que ya antes que uno y otro partiesen del Tucuman habian reducido á forma de Arte y de Lexicon la *Tonocoté*, Kakana, Paquina y Quirandica, al objeto de que á los Padres que estuviesen por entrar al campo de sus labores se les facilitase el camino para aprenderlas. Y para que el pro y útil tuviese mayor alcance, Pedro Agnasco trascribió muchas veces las más de ellas, muy particularmente todo lo compuesto por Alonso Bárcena, en letra muy linda, y asi reproducidas, las entregó al dominio público.

He aquí una serie de datos interesantísimos, porque no solo aprendemos á distinguir entre unas y otras lenguas, sino que tambien hallamos el orígen de ese precioso MS Toba, hoy en la biblioteca del general Mitre, atribuido al Padre Bárcena, y que efectivamente está bien escrito, como que ningún trabajo dió el compulsarlo para la serie de las Lenguas Argentinas. Los dos famosos cuadernos si bien no bastan para aprender el Toba, son de un valor inapreciable, porque nos dan á conocer el Toba de 1592.

El capítulo citado concluye con un elogio bien merecido de los PP. Barcena y Agnasco. ¡Cuántas cosas malas no se deben á la expulsión de los Padres de la Compañía de Jesús! A ello se debe tanta laguna en la cadena de las Lenguas Americanas. El despar-

pajo de papeles fué tremendo, calamitoso y hasta el día de hoy, nos faltan esos Artes del Kaka y Tonocoté que tanto interesan á la historia, á la etnología y á la lingüística.

IV.

La Misión á los Frentones, tiempo perdido y otras materias Matarães.

Devoratis tot linguarum difficultatibus, dice el P. Techo en su cap. 44, los Padres emprendieron la entrada á los Frentones empezando por los Mogosnas y Naticas. "*Verum* (empero), *Deum immortalem, quo successu?*" Los Mogosnas habían dado muerte á Francisco Vera de Aragon, los Frentones estaban en grande agitación, y los PP. no tuvieron más remedio que volver á su asiento entre los Matarães. Por esa vez nada se sacó de tanto sacrificio en aprender las lenguas de los Frentones; pero algo ganó la lingüística, y una vez más demostraron los PP. de la Compañía que para ellos el martirio era la gloria.

En el año 1596 Gaspar Monroy y Juan Viana visitaron á los Tonocotés, y recorrieron la tierra antes evangelizada por el P. Bárcena. (Techo, L. II, cap. 8.)

En el año 1608 tocóle al P. Diego Torres recorrer estos lugares y á propósito de esta entrada, cuenta el P. Techo en su L. III, c. 28, lo siguiente:

"Sed misera Frontonum conditio erat, antiquis moribus sub generis humani hostis tyrannide perseverare amantium. Quos dum conspiceret latissimé usque ad Peruvíæ fines vagantes et insuper cognovisset Abipones, Mataquas, Naticas, Mogosnas, Tonocotanos, Frontonibus agnatas nationes, Sacerdotum defectu sub eadem tyrannide esse impetus illi fuit, Divi Xaverii exemplo, in Europam renavigandi. et per academias Hispaniæ ac Italiæ quantâ posset vocis contentione academicos ad commiserationem tot populorum commovendi."

Triste era el estado de los Frentones, que no querían otra cosa que permanecer en sus costumbres inveteradas, dominados por el enemigo del género humano. Y al verlos extenderse en sus correrías hasta las mismas fronteras del Perú; y además el haberse sabido que los Abipones, *Matacos*, Naticas, Mogosnas, *Tonocotes*, naciones emparentadas con los Frentones, permanecían en la misma esclavitud por falta de sacerdotes, se sintió impulsado, al ejemplo de San Xavier, á volver á Europa, y en las Universidades de España é Italia, á fuerza de exhortaciones despertar en los estudiantes sentimientos de lástima hácia tal gentío.

Esta cita es importante, porque aun cuando no podamos asegurar que el P. Techo haya usado la voz *agnatas* en su verdadera y restringida acepción — parientes por parte de padre — consigna un dato étnico-lingüistico de mucha importancia, y que él sin duda hubo de persona bien informada. Si los Tonocotes, *Mátaguas* y Matagua yos son nuestros Matacos claro está que tenían afinidades étnicas y lingüísticas con las otras naciones de tipo guaicurù, como se hará ver más tarde.

La mansedumbre de los Mataráes á la par de la fiereza de los Frentones es cosa que llama la atención. Esta diferencia característica debemos atribuirla á atavismo, y de ella como veremos despues se podrá deducir algo que sea de interés.

V.

Lo que dice el P. Techo.

Aquí corresponde reproducir integramente el capítulo 15 de Libro VIII y año 1628, (1) siendo ya Gobernador del Tucumán D. Felipe de Albornoz, famoso porque en su tiempo tuvo lugar el alzamiento grande que dió por resultado la destrucción de la ciudad de Londres y su refundación en el Valle de Poman (1633).

«Annus hujus sæculi octavus supra vigesimum clarus expeditione Apostolica» ex Tucumania ad Chaquenses Indios instituta. Chaquensis verò Provinciæ nomine venit quidquid terrarum Paraquariæ, Tucumaniæ, Fluminis Argenti Sanctæ Crucis in Montanis Episcopatus, necnon Chaquensis Archiepiscopatus, immenso pené circuitu ambiunt. Eam secant é Peruviæ montibus orta flumina, longo póst tractu aut in ingentes lacus, aut in Paraquarium fluviumque Argentium influentia. Sub primum Hispanorum adventum multi é Tucumania Peruviáque mortales, novi imperù metu, eo se retraxere, cujus rei fidem faciunt populi Aimarram linguam, Peruvianis vernaculam, adhuc usurpantes. Notiores nationes sunt Taimviæ, centum octoginta et octo pagos olim incolentes, Teutæ,

«El año 1628 se hizo famoso por la Misión Apostólica, que debió salir del Tucumán á los Indios Chaquenses. Corresponde el nombre de Provincia Chaquense á todo el territorio que encierran en inmenso y casi completo círculo las Diócesis de Paraguay, Tucumán, Río de la Plata, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, y también la Archidiócesis de Charcas. A esa Provincia la entrecortan ríos que nacen de los montes del Perú, y que después de una larga travesía se desaguan ó en grandes lagos ó en los ríos Paraguay y de la Plata. Cuando la primera entrada de los españoles, mucha gente del Tucumán y del Perú, de miedo del nuevo régimen, se retiró hacia esa parte, de lo cual hace fé el que aun se encuentra gente que se apropia la lengua Aymará, la vulgar (2) entre los Peruanos. Las

(1) Techo.
(2) Familiar.

Mataguaiæ, Agoiæ Tobæ, Mosobiæ, Japitalagæ, Churumatæ, Tonocotæ, Abipones, et variæ Indorum factiones, diversitate linguarum quàm moribus dissimiliores. Nulla inter hos populos suprema potestas est, Casiquiis Barbarorum more dominicatim vicatimque subsunt. Ex ea gente singuli pro patrono et vitæ protectore unum piscem sibi superstitiosé eligunt, quem ita totâ colunt, ut potiùs fame mori, quàm ejus speciei piscem gustare mavelint. Perpetua inter se et cum finitimis populis exercent prœlia, externis non tam fortitudine quàm crudelitate terribiles.

naciones más conocidas son: Los *Taimvias*, que antes ocupaban 188 pueblos, los Teutas, *Mataguayos*, Agoyas, Tobas, Yapitalagas, Mocoviés, Churumatas, *Tonocotés*, Abipones y varias parcialidades de Indios que más se diferencian en las lenguas que en los usos y costumbres. Entre estas naciones ninguna prima sobre las demás, sino que al uso de Bárbaros, se someten á los Caciques por sus casas y por aldeas. Entre esa gente cada uno con arreglo á la supertición que prevalece, elige uno de tantos peces por patrón y protector de su vida, al que tan de veras adora, que prefiere morir de hambre antes que probar un bocado de pez de esta especie. Entre si y con las naciones vecinas viven en perpetua guerra; terribles para los de afuera, más bien por su crueldad que por su fuerza.

Este es un trozo precioso de mucha importancia para el etnólogo y filólogo. La mención hecha de la lengua Aymará, confirma las sospechas que yo abrigaba de contacto lingüístico entre los Aymaraes y Chaquenses, tipo Mocoví. Lástima que no nos diga el prolijo Padre cuales eran esos indios de habla Aymará.

Cuenta Lozano en su Libro IV. C. 1 lo siguiente: que por los años 1532 hubo una gran seca en el Tucumán. Los indígenas afligidos acudieron á sus hechiceros. Estos les pintaron los males que les sobrevendrían, y muchos dando crédito á estos anuncios se encaminaron «hacia la Provincia del Chaco, donde se mantienen sus miserables descendientes etc.»

Está claro pués que era tradición antigua y recibida, aquella de grandes inmigraciones al Chaco; pero ello no importa asegurar que todos los indios que allí encontramos resulten de una sola invasión. Ante todo debemos tener presente también lo que cuenta Garcilazo de la Vega en su Historia.

Los *Taimvias* parece que debieran ser los *Lenguas*, *Payaguáes* etc. que usaban el boton ó *tembetá*. El nombre se derivaría de la voz guaraní *tembé* —el labio de abajo—que es el desfigurado con estos adornos ó barbotes. Así como *Orejones* son todos los que usan placa ó redondela en esta parte, y *Frentones* los que se rapan la parte anterior de la cabeza, así también se llamaban *Lenguas* todos los que se colocan el barbote.

Los *Mosovias* son los mismos Moscovies, porque la *cc*

(guturación fuerte) dejenera en *s*; y por eso vemos que el Padre Tavolini escribe *Moscovitas*.

Aquí se reunen una vez más tribus *Mataguayas* y *Tonocotanas* con otras de tipo Toba-Mocoví, con la advertencia, *diversitate linguarum quam moribus dissimiliores*. Esto es un hecho, como se verá posteriormente: pero desde ya repetiré que nos prueba que el Mataco es un producto de mestizaje lingüístico en que el léxicon corresponde á un abolengo y el giro gramatical á otro.

VI.

En seguida cuenta el Padre Techo que el Gobernador del Paraguay habia pretendido abrirse paso al Perú por el Chaco, pero que se había visto obligado á abandonarlo por el estorbo de los indios. En el año de que se trata (1628) logró el Gobernador del Tucumán establecerse en esta región y en pos de él entraron los P. P. de la Compañia, en misión á Indios y Españoles. Y prosigue el autor:

«Complures igitur illicó Casiquii variarum factionum ad eum commearunt, quibuscum transegit, ut tribus in regionibus ligna ad totidem nova oppida fundanda, Paranensium adinstar, cæderentur. Numerum quinquaginta millium superare dicebantur hi, quorum linguam reddebat sibi familiarem. Mataguai idiomatis triginta millia ferebantur. Tobarum, Mocoviarum atque Zapitalaguarum, numerosissimarum nationum, idiomata non negligebat, tum quód multi ex his populis magnâ aviditate in Christianorum numerum adscribi postularet, tum quod per eorum terras pervadi posse ad ulteriores provincias numero quamplurimas speraretur. Churumatarum linguam sic fortè dictam, quod Chuchu sœpiùs recurrat, etiam tertiare conabatur. Martino Ledesma Prætore ad fundandamaliam urbem in Solotani (1) fluminis littore ultrà progresso noster Osorius, novi oppidi ad reducendos

Bastantes Caciques pués de diferente pacialidades se le juntaron allí, y con ellos arregló, que se le cediesen en tres territorios, sitios en que se funden otros tantos pueblos, parecidos á los del Paraná. Se estimaban en más de 50,000 aquellos cuya lengua le era conocida. Los del idioma *Mataguayo* se decian ser 30,000 Tampoco dejaba de lado el idioma de los Tobas, Mocovies y Zapitalagas, numerosisimas naciones, tanto porque muchas de estas gentes con gran decisión pedian ser admitidas al Cristianismo, cuanto porque por tierra de ellos se esperaba que se podría pasar á las provincias de más allá, que eran las más. La lengua de los Churumatas, acaso llaman asi porque es tan frecuente la voz *chuchu*, también trataba de aprender. Cuando Martin Ledesma el Gobernador marchó más adelante á la fundación de otra ciudad en la márgen del rio de Solota, nuestro Osorio se quedó

(1) Socotonio ó Esteco. (?)

Barbaros aream designaturus, apud Tobas remansit; unde ad Provincialem scribens, aiebat, tria Indorum oppida in Tobarum, Mocoviorum et Zapitilingarum terris fundari posse, si sociorum copia suppeteret. Addebat, Indos in interioribus regionibus adeó proceros esse ut vix eorum capita elatâ manu attingeret.
Techo. Lib. VIII. Cap. XV.

entre los Tobas con el objeto de señalar el sitio de un nuevo pueblo en que reducir á los Barbaros; y de allí escribiendo al Provincial decía que tres eran los pueblos que convenía fundarse en tierras de los Indios Tobas, Mocovies y Zapitalagas si alcanzare el número de Padres. Agregaba que los Indios del Interior eran tan altos que apenas podía tocarles las cabezas con la mano alzada.

Aquí se ve lo numerosos que eran los Indios de la Nación Mataguaya, y que cerca de ellos siempre andaban los Tobas, como sucede en la actualidad.

VII.

Damos un salto al año 1641, Techo Lib. XIII y Cap. 4 y 5. Allí vemos que el P. Juan Pastor, Rector del Colegio de Esteco, con otro sacerdote, se entró por tierra de Mataráes á 80 leguas de Esteco. En seguida se nos cuenta que los Indios estos eran muy dados al vicio de la embriaguez: hacian ellos sus borracheras circulares, en que por turno se convidaban unos y otros.

Estas eran las de todos los días; y las otras eran recien las grandes, y las apellidaban *honras*, aplicadas á «las impias almas de sus mayores» y celebradas para el cabo de año, cuyo principal objeto era el de beber y más beber. Los convidados se presentaban en fila y ofrecían al dueño de la fiesta un avestruz, que una donosa doncella cargaba sobre la cabeza. Y si las exequias correspondían á más de un finado, los avestruces igualaban en número á estos.

Al dueño de cada uno tenía por obligación que hacerle un regalito, con la condición de corresponder en la misma especie: y del quebrantamiento de este pacto nacían las querellas más sangrientas. La obligación se estendía no sólo á los presentes sino á los hijos y nietos en herencia.

Después de tres días de banquetes funerarios derramaban lágrimas durante una hora entera, y en seguida empezaban las risotadas, bailes y orgía general. Y lo peor de todo era que esa gente se decía Cristiana, y se jactaba de que sus mayores ha-

bían sido catecúmenos de los apostólicos P.P. Alonso Bárcena y Pedro Añasco.

La costumbre aquella de presentar avestruces en las fiestas mortuorias es algo más que curiosa, por cuanto en los enterratorios de la región Calchaquí encontramos el *suri* ó avestruz como adorno de las tinajas sepulcrales: este hecho puede verificarse en los Museos Nacional y de La Plata.

De los Mataráes pasó el Padre Pastor á visitar á los Abipones, y cuando éstos lo rodearon les habló en lengua «Tonocotana y Guaraní» y con tan buen éxito, que pudo abrir la misión.

Dos años más tarde (1643) vemos que seguían las misiones a tierras de *Mataguas* y *Mataguayos*. Lib. XIII c. 24. En el mismo lugar se ve que la lengua general del Chaco era la Tonocoté, que no era Toba, ni tampoco la del Cuzco, pues allí se dice que el «Padre Juan Oloris sabía la lengua de los Incas, y aprendía la Tonocoté, que era la de la misión Chaquense.»

VIII.

Lo que dice el Padre Lozano.

Lo que antecede se ha extractado de la obra del P. Techo. Ahora haré otro tanto con la «Descripción Chorográfica» del Chaco escrita por el Padre Lozano y publicada en Córdoba el año 1733.

Este autor reprodujo lo más de lo que al respecto escribiera el Padre Techo, pero aumentó muchos detalles de interés que ilustran aquel texto y desvanecen algunas dudas. En este capítulo se dará noticia de cuanto haya dicho Lozano á propósito de los Matacos ó Mataguayos, y las citas se referirán á las páginas del libro del mismo Padre.

Hablando del río Paraná dice lo siguiente: «Las costas, que este gran río baña en el Chaco habitan los infieles Abipones, algunos Mocovies, que se huyeron de las fronteras de Salta, y los *Callagaes*, á quienes antiguamente llamaban Mataràes.» pág. 25.

En las páginas 39 y 51 consigna Lozano la tradición, que reproduce en su historia del Tucumán, y lo hace para explicar la densa población del Chaco. Indudablemente el Chaco era el refu-

gio aparente para las tribus más alzadas y belicosas, y es probable que lo que entonces sucediera fuese reproducción de infinitas inmigraciones anteriores y de igual especie. Los descontentos con sujeción al Inca tambien huían á los Chacos.

En la pág. 51 presenta Lozano una larga lista de naciones del Chaco de las que extractaré lo siguiente por ser pertinente á este estudio: «Mataguayos.... Amulalaes, dichos antiguamente Matarás..... Tonocotés..... Chunipies..... Callagaes.....

«Sobre el mismo río de Pilcomayo, apartados cuarenta leguas de la Cordillera están los Tobas y Mataguayos, que serán las donaciones más de cuatro mil indios comedores de carne humana.» (pág. 53). Como siempre los Tobas confinan con los de raza Mataca.

«Sesenta leguas de la Cordillera están poblados sobre los bañados del Pilcomayo á la parte del Río Bermejo muchos Tonocotés y Lules que se retiraron de la gobernación del Tucuman cuando entraron los primeros conquistadores.» (pág. 54.)

«La Nacion, que á esta (Teuta) (1) se sigue, son los Mataguayes. que son los más inmediatos azia Xuxuy.» (pág. 76.) «Hay unos llamados Mataguayes Coronados, y otros Mataguayes Churumatas. Los coronados hablan la lengua Guaraní, aunque la materna suya es diferente. Los Mataguayes Churumatas entienden y hablan diversas lenguas, como son la Quichoa, la Guarany, la Ocloya por los diferentes cautivos, que tienen en sus tierras, y entienden tambien la lengua de los Tobas. Estaban estos Mataguayes repartidos en los cincuenta pueblos siguientes:

«Neantiche, Mocoy, Collemage, Auncapinhé, Hucohas, Hocohá, Oyaha, Natetehá, Chinitiohé, Onin, Anuyguay, Alesnuy, Chayabo, Chioquiose, Hucoha, Chayquehé, Chachinamí, Pelo, Cahotochin, Nacalgoy, Chenesse, Halcacha, Cheneschó, Peque, Nitilinquin, Guays, Guocopa, Hucuchinami, Tiuquiahó, Hocalá, Leguelsehá, Oyaho, Carininquin, Yantis, Luguarache, Neglisehé, Loquelesse, Queysehé, Cotonhá, Tapela, Onoralgualache, Poytin, Hopitata, Hopitahé, Tatotehé, Lechonehá, Lohoteá, Tactoy, Apegatin, Rimpihá.» (pág. 76.)

Ni una sola vez encontramos la terminación—*gasta*— y sí algo parecido á la otra *a* y *aho*. A la prueba negativa no hay que darle demasiada importancia, pero tampoco es para pasada por alto.

(1) Tal vez de *teuj-taj* río grande, nombre mataco del Río Bermejo.—J. P.

IX.

Sigue la descripción de Mataguayos, etc.

«Todas estas naciones, que aquí hemos puesto con sus poblaciones, conviene á saber, Taynuyes, Teutas, Mataguayes, Agoyas, Xolotas, Tobas, Mocobies, Yapitalaguas, y también Aguilotes, que viven entre Mocobies, y los Palomos, que casi se han acabado, todos tienen unas mismas costumbres, y son semejantes en todo, que por eso los hemos juntado, para hablar sin distinción de unos á otros. Todos son Caribes, comedores de carne humana, pérfidos por extremo sin poderse fiar de su palabra: muy dados á la guerra, que levantan entre sí fácilmente, y algunos la tienen á veces con los Guaycurús, y todos de contínuo con el español, aunque respecto de estos, más se pueden llamar ladrones, que soldados, porque nunca hacen cara á los españoles, sino que acometen á hurtadillas, y asegurando antes muy bien el lance por medio de espías que se pueden llamar incansables, pues estarán explorando los estalajes del español uno, dos y tres años, observando de noche la disposición de todo con gran cuidado, y si hallarán resistencia, ó no, y hasta que se aseguran, no dan el asalto: con que cuando acometen, ya es á cosa hecha, y en que no hay peligro. Estas espías, andan á gatas de noche, por lo que tienen los codos llenos de callos, y nunca acometen por venir solos, y si son sentidos se escabullen con facilidad, y aun algunos por arte mágica, toman figura de varios animales mansos, para hacer más seguras sus observaciones. En medio de que nunca hacen frente al español, no obstante en viéndose acosados en paraje de donde no pueden huir, pelean con valor, y venden muy caras sus vidas, como se vé cada día, y lo experimentó ahora cinco años un Maestre de Campo del Tercio de la ciudad de Santiago del Estero, el cual dando con cinco Mocovíes en una isla de bosque, les cercó con parte de su tercio, pero ellos se le resistieron varonilmente hiriendo á muchos españoles antes de morir los cuatro, y el último, que quedó solo con su mujer, mantuvo con valor la resistencia, suministrándole armas su misma mujer, sin quererse entregar hasta que le mataron á balazos, habiendo el herido antes á flechazos á muchos españoles y casi mortalmente al Maestre de Campo. Las armas, de que todos usan, son

flechas, macanas y dardos, que labran pulidamente de cierta madera muy dura: son muy largos, que tendrán quince palmos, y muy pesados; pero los juegan con mucha destreza, y agilidad. La punta la labran de asta de venado, y no la encajan apretada en el dardo, sino antes holgada, y la atan un cordelillo, para que en metiéndola en el cuerpo del enemigo, y sacando con presteza el dardo, quede dentro la punta, y apresado el enemigo con la cuerda; porque la punta no puede salir del cuerpo, sino haciendo mayor herida, porque en la parte, por donde se encaja en el dardo le labran una lengüeta, que impide la salida. A los enemigos que hieren en la guerra, si tienen tiempo, les cortan indefectiblemente la cabeza, en que son muy diestros, pues en un momento les buscan las coyunturas, y las siegan con su cuchillo ordinario formado de las quijadas de la palometa. Despues de cortada, la desuellan desde los ojos hasta la nuca, y aquella piel con sus cabellos la estiran, secan y guardan para celebrar sus mayores fiestas y demostrar su valentía.

«Antiguamente andaban á pie: pero despues se han hecho grandes ginetes, porque han hecho grandes presas de caballos de las estancias y poblaciones de los españoles, de manera, que de solo la ciudad de Santa Fé en solo veinte años, que ha la persiguen con empeño, habrán cogido más de quince mil caballos. Por eso estan el día de hoy más diestros en cavalgar, que los mismos españoles: corriendo el caballo de huida, con estribar en solo su dardo montan en él, ya por los lados, ya por detrás: no usan estribos, y sus sillas son bien desengañadas, y á veces andan en pelo, pero con tal ligereza, que rara vez les dan alcance los españoles, pues con un azote de tres ramales, que cada uno trae en la mano, hacen volar los caballos. Cuando andan en la guerra se contentan con poco sustento, que cada uno carga á la gurupa, y se rien de las muchas prevenciones de los españoles, pues ellos con un poco de carne mal asada, y lo que les ofrece el campo de fruta, ó de otras cosas emprenden viaje de cien leguas para la guerra, sin tener más cama para dormir, que el duro suelo, ó cuando más un cuero duro de vaca. Bien que esto no es mucho, pues apenas tienen camas de mejor condición en sus tierras.

«Estas son de paja tendida por todo el suelo de la casa, la cual aunque baja, es muy larga para que pueda tenderse todo el linaje dentro, cada familia con su hogar en medio. El más viejo se acues-

ta en la cabecera, y despues á un lado y á otro, los hijos según sus edades, á quienes tambien por ambos lados se van siguiendo los nietos, y demás descendientes cada uno con sus familias, de suerte que en el modo de situarse para dormir están pintando el árbol de la descendencia. Allí no tienen más abrigo, que ramas y hierbas, con que cubren sus ranchos, en que á todas horas tienen fuego, y el más parado suele tener para abrigarse una manta de pieles de venado ó nutrias.

«Los varones andan comunmente desnudos del todo sin ningún empacho, aunque tan curtida su piel con los temporales de que no se guardan, que parecen vestidos de badana, ó de cordovan, en particular los viejos, que son muchos, porque no les dañan las inclemencias del cielo, á que se hacen desde niños. Ví en Santa Fe la cabeza de un Mocobí, como de cuarenta años, cuya piel tenía más de medio dedo de grueso. Las mujeres todas andan cubiertas de pies á cabeza con mantas de pieles de animales: y las mas principales se cubren con tejidos de hierba correosa mas gruesa que pita, que en esta Provincia llamamos *chaguar*, y nace silvestre; de ella hacen un hilo semejante al de los zapateros, y texen su vestido, á que las hijas, y mujeres de los más principales añaden algunas labores de blanco y negro, y del mismo hilo labran tambien cántaros, que empegándolos con betun de cera, mantienen bien el agua, y los brevajes, con que se embriagan.

«Todas las mujeres se pintan los rostros, pechos y brazos al modo que en Africa y España las moras, y las más principales con unas labores, que nunca se borran, porque desde que nacen empiezan sus madres á gravarles los colores en la misma carne con unas espinas gruessas de ciertos pescados, y color azul obscuro, de que tambien tiñen algo, aunque no tanto, á los niños varones. Assi mismo las Madres á los de uno, y otro sexo arrancan el pelo de la cabeza, haciendo un como camino de tres dedos de ancho desde la frente hasta la coronilla de la cabeza del todo pelado, donde nunca les vuelve á nacer el cabello. Así andan los Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies, y Aquilotes, hombres y mujeres, con que estas quedan feas sobre manera, aunque á su parecer muy hermosas. Y para que se pelen las mujeres, se les suele aparecer el Diablo en figura de una india, que sale del bosque más cercano tapada con una red, y les dice que las que no se quieren dexar pelar, no habían de comer pescado, porque si sin pelarse lo comen, se morirán:

con que si alguna por el dolor se resistía á dexarse arrancar los cabellos, luego abraza ese dolor, por no privarse de la comida del pescado, que es la que más apetecen. Otras de estas naciones no se abren el camino que diximos, sino que totalmente se arrancan todos los cabellos de la parte anterior, como cosa de quatro dedos. Y algunos de los Mataguayes se arrancan el cabello de en medio de la cabeza formando una corona, por donde se llama coronados, aunque los Mataguayes Churumatas andan, como los Tobas, y Mocobíes.

«Al tiempo, que los varones de noche se ocupan en assar al fuego las carnes de sus enemigos, para darles sepulcro racional en sus brutales vientres, suelen estar las viejas, que son ordinariamente hechizeras, y las veneran como á Sacerdotisas, cantando toda, ó casi toda una noche, los triunfos contra sus enemigos, ó las endechas por los difuntos; más si han tenido mal sucesso en la guerra, á la vuelta no se oye una palabra en todos los Pueblecillos, ó Rancherías, que participaron de la desgracia, observando estrecho silencio en señal de su sentimiento, y todo lo atribuyen á varios agüeros. Duran en esta tristeza algunos días hasta que poco á poco se van olvidando, y saliendo de sus Ranchos: que entonces los parientes de los muertos empiezan á convidar á los demás para la venganza, y es ley inviolable, que dichos parientes ayan de capitanear á los demás, exponiéndose á los trances más peligrosos: pero no han de ir más al lugar donde sucedió la desgracia, porque se imaginan, que si alli pelean, serán fijamente vencidos.

«No siembran sino que viven de la caza y pezca, para que andan vagos por los bosques y ríos, y en volviéndose á casa, lo ordinario es embriagarse con el vino, que hacen de la miel silvestre ó de la algarroba, y les dura la embriaguez hasta que la falta de provisión les hace salir á buscar de nuevo otra, y si algun rato les queda libre, lo ocupan en labrar las armas para sus guerras. Algunos de ellos como los Mocobíes, y Aguilotes fuera de la caza y pezca comen tambien langostas assadas, ó cocidas. Para todo lo demás hacen todas estas naciones, que sus mujeres les sirvan con bastante fatiga: porque cortan ellas leña, y la conducen en sus ombros al rancho, aun llevando juntamente su hijo á los pechos; assi el agua del rio, y lo demás con tal rigor, que en los caminos anda solo el marido á caballo, haciendo que la mujer, y su hijo

tierno le sigan á pié. Y la madre no más piadosa con la criatura, que ya empieza á andar, la obliga á caminar á pié por llevar ella en sus brazos al perro, que les hace compañia. Es verdad que todo este trabajo es en las Indias de estas Naciones más tolerable por ser ellas de muchas fuerzas y muy robustas, de cuya robustez es prueba lo que hacen luego que paren; pues yendose con la criatura al rio ó arroyo más cercano, se echan en él á nadar, y se lavan muy bien, sin que por esto experimenten el menor daño. No obs ante si los maridos cautivan alguna mujer de otra nación barbara ó española, la perdonan la vida, para que sirvan á su mujer, como esclava, y tambien para manceba, aunque ha de ser con recato de que no lo entienda la propia mujer, porque son sobremanera zelosas, y les afrentan, si llegan á Españolas.....

«Persigue y trabaja mucho á estas Naciones la enfermedad de las viruelas, que hace en ellos horrible riza por no tener más médicos que los viejos Chupadores, que sino le sanan al enfermo, que es lo más ordinario, lo desamparan totalmente. Quando alguna muere, los que acaso se hallan presentes, le abren allí mismo la sepultura, y le entierran tendido, y sobre la sepultura clavan un dardo con el casco de algun Christiano ó enemigo suyo en la punta y luego desamparan el lugar, sin bolver jamás á passar por allí mientras dura la memoria. No se ha reconocido en ellos rastros de religion, sino que son finissimos Atheistas, sin conocimiento alguno, ó de la otra vida, ó de la inmortalidad del alma. A sus hechizeras tienen algun respeto, más por el mal que temen les hagan con sus hechizos, que por bien que esperan de ellas, aunque ellas se esfuerzan á persuadir á los demás, que en su mano está la salud, ó su enfermedad, y estos son los que hacen más vigorosa resistencia al Evangelio, oponiéndose á que no reciban los suyos, ni dexen administrar á sus hijos el Santo Bautismo, persuadiéndoles á que les quita la vida, para que se valen de lo que passa á los principios de cualquier Mission, quando solo bautizan los Missioneros á los que están en artículo de la muerte, y como despues lo ven ordinariamente morir, se arrayga más en sus cortos entendimientos este error tan perjudicial.»

Desc. Choro. del Chaco, pág. 83.

Esta relación de los Padres Misioneros se confirma con lo que han observado los viajeros que han visitado á estos mismos Indios en tiempos modernos y hasta en la actualidad.

X.

Algo más sobre Matarás y Tonocotés.

El último capítulo ha sido por demás largo; pero solo así se completaba la descripción del P. Lozano.

En seguida extractaré algo más de las pp. 89 y 94:

«Por fin el río Bermejo, y caminando á orillas del Paraná el rumbo al Sur, está la Nación de los Abipones. Fué antiguamente muy numerosa. pues en un solo Pueblo de ellos cercano á la ciudad de la Concepción, halló el Padre Juan Fonte, uno de los primeros Obreros de esta Provincia, más de ocho mil almas, y en la Nación de los Matarás, ó Amulalas, que estaba ocho leguas de la misma ciudad, encontró Pueblo de más de siete mil, y es constante, avía más de cien mil Indios en el contorno de aquella Ciudad del Río Bermejo. El día de hoy se mantienen en un Pueblo Christiano de la Nación de los Matarás en la jurisdición de Santiago del Estero; los demás, y los Abipones no son tantos, como antiguamente; pero es nación numerosa, y la que tienen casi arruinada á la ciudad de Santa Fe, de la Vera-cruz. Llámanse el día de hoy Callagaes, que antiguamente se llamaban Abipones.

La última Nación del Chaco, de quien resta hablar, es la de los Lules, ó Tonocotés, que se dividen en Lules grandes y pequeños. Los pequeños son los que propiamente mantienen en su parcialidad el nombre Lules: porqué los grandes se buelven á dividir en otras tres parcialidades de Toquistinès, Iseistinés, y Oxeistinés, y los grandes y pequeños son entre sí muy opuestos. Sus ascendientes aora ciento y quarenta años fueron Chiristianos, y reducidos á Pueblos por San Francisco Solano su primer Apostol, y cultivados por el. Venerable Padre Alonso de Bargana de nuestra Conpañía, formando numerosas Encomiendas, que gozaba la ciudad de Talavera de Madrid, llamada comunmente Esteco; mas hostigados con los malos tratamientos, y apremio de los Encomendaderos, mataron á uno de ellos, y se retiraron á los antiguos bosques, que son unos secadales, á donde por falta de agua no podía penetrar el Español, y vienen á caer entre Tucumán y Salta, Rio Balbuena abaxo, aunque otros Tonocotés se internaron en el Chaco.»

Más tarde volveré á este punto de la confusión entre Lules y Toconotés.

En la p. 113 etc. repite el P. Lozano lo que hallamos en el P. Techo, y establece que los Matarás del Rio Bermejo «hablaban la lengua Toconoté.»

El P. Gaspar Osorio en una carta que figura en los pp. 174 y 175 dice entre otras cosas, esto:

«Con una multitud de otros Indios, llamados Motaguayes, gente muy humilde y peregrina que no tienen asiento cierto: todos estos juntos con un Pueblo muy grande llamado *Nataguayeo* hablan una misma lengua si vien en algunos vocablos diferencian... más abajo están los Tobas... más abajo están los Mocovies. Yocalaiuies: pero advierto á V. P. que todos estos infieles no son en el Chaco sino los Arrabales del: porque el Chaco en opinión de la gente de Tucumán, son los indios Tonocotés, que se huyeron de esta Gobernación, cuando entraron los primeros conquistadores...

«Estos son labradores, siembra en los bañados de Pilcomayo sobre el cual rio, y otro llamado Yabibirí está la gente del Chaco diferentes de los Toconotés sobre dichos; hacerlos un mare magnum de Indios.

En las pp. 186 y 187 cuenta Lozano como el P. Cerqueyra confesaba á los Matarás (á 100 leguas de Santiago) en lengua Toconoté.

Más abajo p. 196 vuelve Lozano a tratar á los Mataguayes de «feroces» y «comedores de carne humana». Desde mediados del siglo 17 empiezan las naciones Tonocotanas á desaparecer del escenario Chaquense, y en su lugar los Mocovíes, Tobas y Abipones se hacen cada vez más formidables á las colonias Españolas. El siguiente párrafo se halla en la p. 230 «... pues entre quinientas familias que llegaron á estar juntas, se hablaban cuatro lenguas del todo diversas: Mocoví, Toba, Malbalá y Mataguay, y en lo interior del Chaco es cierto se hablaban otras muy distintas, bien que en más número de gentío: porque estos Indios fronterizos solo son residuo de Naciones, que se han ido consumiendo andando á caza unos de otros, como de fieras. Su lenguaje es bárbaro, como de gente tan poco racional, y se añade á su dificultad el que ellos (á lo que parece á persuasion del demonio) pronuncian tan cercenadas las razones, y suprimidas las sílabas, que es dificultosísimos percibirles.»

Así desaparecen las noticias de los Tonocotés, quedando solo algo de los Mataguayos, y ellos no muy bien parados.

XI.

Lo que dice el Padre Machoni de los Tonocotés.
Fecha de la licencia 1732.

El Padre Machoni empieza así su arte del Lule:

AL LECTOR.

«La lengua que enseña este arte, no es general pero sí, es particular y propia de cinco muy numerosas naciones, Lule, Isistiné, Toquistiné, Oristiné y Tonocoté; el gentío de esta última es en número de sesenta mil almas. Habrá más de cien años que las cinco referidas naciones vivian en sus pueblos inmediatos á dos ciudades de españoles; los Tonocoté á las de la Concepción hoy destruida, y en aquel tiempo, situada sobre una laguna (1) no muy distante del Rio Bermejo ó grande del Chaco. predicaron el Santo Evangelio á los Tonocotés el V. P. .... se malogró todo, por causa del español, con quien disgustados los Tonocotés, se retiraron á lo más interior del Chaco, haciendo sus moradas sobre las riberas del Rio Jabibiri y Pilcomayo.»

Esto no es mucho que digamos, pero al propio tiempo es el único argumento que se da para sostener que el Tonocoté del R. Bárcena era el Lule del P. Machoni.

Un poco más abajo agrega el autor estas palabras:

«Si hubiera tenido el arte y vocabulario del idioma de estos Indios, que ha más de cien años compuso el V. P. Alonso de Bárzena, cúando evangelizó á los Tonocotés y Lules; del cual arte, por no haberse impreso, no ha quedado más que la noticia que de él se da en la vida de este Misionero Apostólico... »

Al hablar de la lengua de estos Indios volveré sobre este dato del buen Padre; pero por el momento sólo se trata de las Naciones, de sus nombres y de su ubicación geográfica si bien Machoni en cierto modo confunde una cosa con otra.

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(1) La Cangayé.

XII.

Lo que dice el Abate Jolis en su historia del Chaco.

El año 1789 el Abate Jolis publicó su interesante historia sobre el gran Chaco de la que sólo el primer tomo vió la luz. De este tratado traduciré algunos trozos, (porque está en italiano) empezando de la p. 390.

Nuestro Abate empieza por burlarse de los sesenta mil *Tonocotés*, puestos por el P. Machoni sobre las márgenes del Rio Yabibirí entre el Verde y el Pilcomayo, y continua en estas palabras:

«Deseoso yo de cerciorarme sobre la existencia de los tales *Tonocotés*, pregunté con bastante empeño á muchos indios de varias naciones, así del Perù, como de otras partes que vivían hacia el Sud y Este, y que al mismo tiempo daban razón de todo el Chaco, como baqueanos que eran; más no tuve la suerte de encontrar uno que supiese de semejantes bárbaros; no siendo que fuesen aquellos muy sabidos y conocidos bajo otro nombre, esto es, el de *Casó*, pero no en número tal como lo pretendía Lozano»

Un poco más abajo y p. 392 se expresa de este modo, criticando siempre al P. Lozano:

«En el catálogo de las diversas Naciones pone él equivocado, los Lules, los Isistines, Toquistines, Oristinés y Tonocotés, que todas son tribus de una misma Nación. Otro tanto hace de los Tobas, Aquilotes, Palomos, Orejones y Callagaes, que dividen otras tantas naciones: en vez de que como miembros dependen de una sola, esto es, de la Toba; como à la Nación Vilela pertenecen los Chinopies, los Pasaynes, los Guacaes, los Atalalaes, los Ocoles, los Umuampas, los Hipas, los Yecoonitas y otras de igual raza: no obstante que cada uno tenía su régulo ó Cacique y que viven separados. En tal sentido pudo él, no sin semblanza de verdad, asegurar que eran innumerables las Naciones del Chaco, pero no por eso había necesidad de hacer trasmigrar allí del Perú otras más civilizadas, ó del Tucuman, de las menos *civiles*.

«Las Naciones que realmente existen en el Chaco son: los

Chriguanos, los Matacos, los Mataguayos, los Tobas, los Vilelas, los Mocovíes, los Abipones, los Lules, los Mataraes, los Yapitalaga, los Albayas, ò sea Guaycurúes, los Guanas y los Payaguaes.»

Con escepción de los Lules y Mataraes dice Jolis que estas Naciones permanecen en su gentilidad.

Por lo demás con su descripción de los Mataraes Jolis reproduce más ó menos lo que nos cuentan los PP. Techo y Lozano, pero concluye con algo importante de propia cosecha, como se verá en la pág. 451 en que cuenta de los Mataraes, que cuando, él se retiraba del país, estos Indíos en número de 700 ú 800, vivían en un pueblito llamado Matará, 36 leguas al este de Santiago del Estero, estaban encomendados á la noble familia de Ureyola, y concluye con estas palabras, á propósito de los Mataraes y Mopás:

«Lo que yo me sé es, que ni los unos ni los otros hablan ya la lengua Tonocoté, sino solo la del Cuzco ó sea del Perú.»

Es este un dato bien curioso. Por lo demás las observaciones del P. Jolis á propósito de lo que nos dicen los PP. Lozano y Machoni aunadas al juicio que de las mismas hizo el abate Hervas me servirán de disculpa si yo tambien rechazo, la identidad de los Lules de Machoni y Tonocotés de las Misiones Jesuíticas.

El P. Jolis estuvo encargado de la Misión en Macapillo el año 1767, entre los Pasainis, parcialidad Vilela; desde luego su testimonio es muy importante.

XIII.

Lo que escribe Hervás á propósito de los Tonocotés

El abate Hervas publicó su edición castellana del Catálago de las Lenguas el año 1800. Lo que dice en su tomo primero pp. 164 y siguientes, es tan al caso que me veo obligado á reproducirlo en su integridad.

« La lengua *mataguaya* se habla por una Nación no poco numerosa, y la más vil del Chaco, establecida entre los grados 21 y 24 de latitud, entre los grados 315 y 317 de longitud y confinante con los Chiriguanos. Los indios de dicha Nación se conocen por los españoles con el nombre de *Mataguayos*, tomado del que tenía la tribu *mataguaya*, que les servía para la labor de

los campos, y para el comercio con ellos. Las demás tribus de la Nación mataguaya se conocieron después sucesivamente con los nombres de *agoyas, tentes, tainoas,* (ó tainuzes) *palomos, ajotas, tañis,* (se duda si esta última tribu pertenece á otra Nación): estos nombres no se usan ya, más solamente los siguientes: *matacos, hueshuos, pesatupos, abuchetas, imacos,* etc.

Todas las tribus hablan un mismo idioma con pequeña diferiencia, como dice el señor Abate don Joseph Araoz, residente en Faenza, el cual fué misionero de los mataguayos, y había ya cuarenta años que hizo una gramática de su lengua, y un vocabulario; más por razón del gran tiempo pasado, y de su crecidísima edad, no se acuerda ya de la dicha lengua, que no ha procurado conservar, porque le era inútil en las actuales circunstancias, en que la adorable providencia nos ha colocado. El dicho señor Araoz trabajó mucho con otros misioneros en la conversión de los mataguayos, de los que ciento fueron agregados á la misión de los Chiriguanos llamada Rosario. No pocos jesuitas en el siglo pasado y en el presente se han empleado en la conversión de los mataguayos, más con ningun otro efecto, que con el del glorioso martirio, como se dice en los libros 9, 10 y 24 de la historia del Paraguay por el P. Charlevoix.

« La lengua *lules,* simple en su artificio, y diversa de las demás lenguas americanas (de que tengo noticia, ó cuyos elementos gramaticales he leído,) se habla en dos Poblaciones de las misiones de los jesuitas en el Chaco. Estas poblaciones, que se llaman *Miraflores* y *Valbuena,* pertenecen á la diócesis de Tucumàn y están situadas en las riberas del rio Salado, ácia el grado 25 de latitud, y entre los grados 313 y 314 de longitud. Valbuena está al oriente de Miraflores en la distancia de doce leguas. El P. Machoni en su gramática lule impresa el año 1732 (de la que he sacado el compendio gramatical que publicaré) da breve noticia de las naciones que hablaban dialectos de la lengua *lule:* más porque dicha noticia no conviene con la que sobre el mismo asunto se lee en las historias de los PP. Techo, Lozano y Charlevoix, he juzgado deber suplicar al señor Abate Camaño que me favorezca con hacer diligentes averiguaciones entre los misioneros de la Nación lule, que aun viven, y residen en Faenza, y comunicarme el parecer de ellos sobre las misiones que hablan la lengua *lule,* para cotejarlo con el del señor Abate don Joseph Ferragut, residente en Rábena,

el cual ha sido misionero de los indios como que segun el dicho Machoni descienden de los lules. Fundándome en estos documentos he podido advertir algunas equivocaciones en la noticia que Machoni da de las naciones que hablan la lengua *lule:* y para que las dichas equivocaciones se conozcan mejor, trasladaré antes de impugnarlas, la noticia que de los lules se lee al principio de la gramática lule de Machoni:

I.

«La lengua *lule*, dice Machoni, es propia de cinco naciones numerosas llamadas *lule, isistiné, toquistiné, oristiné* y *toconoté*, las cuales más de cien años ha (esto es, desde el año 1600) vivian reducidos á población.

II.

«La Nación toconoté tenía casi sesenta mil personas, y estaba vecina á la ciudad de la *Concepción*, situada sobre un lago poco lejano del rio grande del Chaco, que hoy se llama Vermejo y las otras cuatro naciones estaban en poblaciones pobladísimas cerca de la ciudad llamada ya Talavera de Madrid, ya Esteco, la cual se había fundado sobre la ribera del rio Salado á sesenta leguas del sitio, en que edificada la tercera vez pereció en el terremoto acaecido el año 1692, hundiéndose totalmente en lo interior de la tierra. También ha perecido la ciudad de la Concepción.

III.

«Los jesuitas Alonso Barcena, Hernando ó Fernando Monroz y Juan Viana en el año 1589, anunciaron el Santo Evangelioá los lules ó los isistinés, á los *toquistinés*, y á los *oristinés;* y todos estos reducidos ya à población oyeron varias veces predicar á San Francisco Solano.

IV.

«Los venerables misioneros P. Pedro Añasco y el dicho P. Barcena predicaron el Santo Evangelio á los *toconotes:* y Bárcena, siendo de sesenta y cinco años, compuso gramática y vocabulario en lengua *toconoté*.

V.

«Las cuatro naciones nombradas antes, que estaban cerca de la infeliz ciudad de Esteco, huyeron á las selvas del lado opuesto

del rio *Salado*, y habitaron allí sin que se supiera nada de ellas hasta el año 1710, en que voluntariamente salieron de las selvas, y el señor don Esteban Urizar, gobernador del Tucumán encargó el cuidado de ellas á los jesuitas.

VI.

«La Nación *matará* y otras naciones del *Chaco*, entienden el idioma *lule*, porque comercian con la lule. »

He aquí sobre estas noticias de Machoni algunas observaciones, que han merecido la crítica aprobación del señor Abate Camaño:

I. Por tradición antigua, y poco fundada se creía que en lo interior del Chaco en las riberas del rio *Pilcomayo*, (países hasta ahora desconocidos) habitaban numerosas tribus de la Nación *toconoté*, de la cual el P. Lozano hace mención en la descripción del Chaco valiéndose de las cartas del V. P. Gaspar Osorio, célebre misionero del Chaco, escritas hácia el año 1630. En estas cartas se describe el Chaco, se dá noticia de sus naciones, y se hace mención de los *toconotés*, del Pilcomayo, que huyeron del Tucuman, cuando en esta entraron los conquistadores hácia el año 1549; y se añade en dichas cartas, que segun la relación de los habitadores de Guadalcazar, ciudad del Chaco, se tenía noticia cierta de los *toconotés*, para cuya busca se disponía el dicho P. Osorio.

II El Padre Machoni pués creyó que los *lules* eran *toconotés* y que estos formaban aquella Nación que se había refugiado á las selvas: y sabiendo èl por las historias de las misiones de los jesuitas que los PP. Monroz y Viana habían convertido á los *lules*, y que los PP. Bárcena y Añasco habían convertido á los *toconotés*, uniendo estas noticias con la tradición de la antigua huida de los *toconotés*, juzgó que los toconotés del Pilcomayo, de los que hasta ahora nada se sabe, eran los toconotés convertidos por los jesuitas, y por San Francisco Solano, que también fué apóstol de los *toconotés*.

III Los *toconotés* de que fué apóstol el P. Bárcena eran los ascendientes de los indios de matará, ó de los *matarás* antes nombrados. *Matará* es palabra peruana que significa una yerva que en español se suele llamar *espadaña* y en italiano se llama *galanga;* y de esta yerba abunda el país en que están los *matarás*. Estos indios hablaban el idioma *toconoté* (cuya gra-

mática hizo el P. Bárcena) como claramente se infiere de una carta que el dicho Bárcena escribió desde *Matará* al P. Juan de Atienza, provincial de los jesuitas del Perú, al cual dice así; «En la lengua *toconoté*, y con la diligencia que Dios da al Padre Pedro de Añasco, creo que el cielo se alegra y V. R. se regocijaría.... si viera por sí mismo el fervor y el cuidado con que pequeños y grandes vienen á oir la doctrina en sus lenguas etc.» La población del Matará que tenía ocho mil personas, y estaba en la ciudad antes nombrada de la Concepción, por causa de las incursiones de los *abipones*, *mocobis*, tobas *mocosnos* y *calcaquiés*, fué mudada á la jurisdicción de *Santiago del Estero* sobre el rio *Salado* á 28 grados de latitud, y á 30 leguas de *Santiago*.

«Los indios pués llamados *matarás* son los verdaderos toconotés (en número de sesenta mil en la jurisdicción de la *Concepción*, como dice Machioni citado), á los que San Francisco Solano y los jesuitas evanjelizaron. El número de ellos era tan grande que los toconotés tributarios en la sola jurisdicción de Esteco antes nombrada, llegaban á ser treinta mil. Había también toconotès en la Concepción, en Santago y en San Miguel. En Esteco debía haber á lo menos cien mtl toconotès pués los tributarios eran treinta mil, como se ha dicho: y al rey no pagaban tributo las mujeres ni los niños, ni las niñas. Esta numerosa Nación actualmente está reducida á número pequeño de personas por causa de las pestes, y de los trabajos ó servicios personales que los españoles les obligan á hacer contra la expresa prohibición de las leyes españolas de las indias, y de las frecuentes y rigurosas órdenes de los reyes católicos. Cada día y á cada paso suceden en América hechos que demuestran la necesidad de depositar y encargar, como antes se dijo, á los misioneros todo el cuidado de las misiones, si se quiere dar una providencia útil al servicio de la religión y del estado.

«Se infiere pués que la nación *matará* era la *toconoté*. Veamos ahora si las cuatro tribus ó naciones *lules*, antes nombradas, descienden de los *lulez* convertidos, y si tenían origen común con los *toconotés*.»

«Techo en la historia del Paraguay hablando de los Padres Fernando Monroi y Juan Viana antes citados, dice en el año 1607, que los *lules* antiguos hablaban diversas lenguas, esto es

la *quechua*, la *toconoté* y la *cacána*. Ellos debian hablar la lengua *quechua*, porque eran subditos de los Incas, ó de los emperadores del Perú, en donde la *quechua* era la lengua propia y universal: y debian hablar también la *toconoté* porque habían vivido con los *toconotés*; y la lengua propia de ellos sería la *cacána*, nombre que en la lengua *quichua* ó peruana significa *serrano* ó montañés, y proviene de la palabra *caca*, montaña. Se ignora la calidad de la lengua *cacana* que era propia de dichos lules: más de la relación de Techo se infiere que era diversa de la *toconotè*. Las palabras *toconot* y *toconoté* no tienen significación alguna en el idioma *lule*, los cuales me han dicho no haber oído jamás de esta, ni de los *matarás* (que son los verdaderos *toconotés*) que estas naciones sean *parientas* suyas: y los indios llaman parientas á todas las naciones que hablan el idioma de ellos: un misionero de los *matarás* me ha dicho que oyó hablar algunas veces á sus indios una lengua que le era desconocida: y que habiéndose informado de la calidad de ella, supo que era idioma antiguo de los *matarás* más porque el dicho misioneros sabe solamente la lengua *quechua*, con la que hablaba á los *matarás*, no se puede decidir si las lenguas *matara* y *toconote* son diversas totalmente, ó dialectos de una misma lengua.

«Tampoco se puede saber si la lengua *cacána* de los lules antiguos es la que hablaban actualmente los *lules*: porque estos como antes dixe, no descienden probablemente de los lules convertidos antiguamente, como afirma Machoni. Los *lules* modernos son pacíficos, y los antiguos eran fieros: en la lengua de los lules modernos no se halla ninguna palabra española ni se ha descubierto entre ellos señal alguna de religión. Los lules modernos se dan el nombre de *pele* (que significa hombre) y la palabra *lule* nada significa en su lengua. Ultimamente en las historias de los jesuitas, en la que se trata de la conversión de los lules antiguos, no se hace mención de las tribus *isistiné*, *toquistiné* y *oristiné*, antes nombradas.

«Sobre los *lules* modernos solamente he hallado ser ciertas las siguientes noticias. El invencible señor D. Esteban Urizar, de que antes se hizo mención, persiguiendo en el año 1670 á las naciones guerreras *abipona*, toba, etc. á los lules que halló pacíficos convidó con misioneros para que los recibieran. Entregó al cuidado de los jesuitas la misión de los lules, los cuales

después de haber sido fundada, por causa de las incursiones de algunas naciones bàrbaras estuvieron errantes por países de españoles hasta el año 1752, en que se restablecieron en su antiguo lugar de Miraflores llamado de San Esteban.

«En este lugar había quinientos y cincuenta lules. Las tribus isistiné y toquistiné salieron de las selvas el año 1751, y se establecieron en Valbuena que también se llama San Juan Bautísia. En esta población el año 1766 había setecientas y cuarenta personas de las dos tribus. De la tribu *oristiné*, y ni aun de su nombre no ha quedado memoria entre los lules: se conjetura que el nombre *oristiné* quizá lo haía sido propio de la tribu *lule*, que en sus peregrinaciones lo había perdido.»

«Cinco años después de haber yo publicado en italiano las observaciones antecedentes sobre los *lules*, *toconotés* etc. el señor Jolis ha dado á luz pública la historia del Chaco (15), en la que sin citarme confirma los reparos que en ellas he hecho. Jolis juzga (1) fabulosa la noticia que Machoni y Lozano dan de los sesenta mil toconotés que había en las riveras del rio *Yabibiré*, entre *Verde* y *Pilcomayo*. Asimismo no cree que á cuarenta leguas de Pilcomayo hacia el Sur en las faldas de la cordillera americana estaban los indios *Churumatas*, que se servían de los *llamas* (animales americanos) para cultivar la tierra; porque los *llamas* no pueden vivir sino en países frios y son calientes los que suponen habitarse por los *Churumatas*. Dice asimismo que Lozano se engaña en poner en el catálogo de naciones diversas á los *lules*, *osistinés*, *toquistinés*, *oristinés* y *toconotés* que son tribus de una misma nación. Ultimamente afirma que los misioneros Pedro de Añasco y Alfonso Bárcena, con avisos y sermones en lengua *toconoté*, que era la propia de los *matará* y con su ejemplo, consiguieron convertirlos á la santa fe. Hasta aquí las observaciones de Jolis, que de los *Churumatas* no da las nóticias necesarias para conocer su carácter y lengua.

(1) Jolis citado p. (15) lib. 6 art. I p. 490... 492. art. 7 p. 450 americanos.

XIV.

Observaciones sobre el capítulo anterior.

Largo es lo que se ha reproducido en el capítulo anterior; pero sólo así se podría hacer uno cargo de los argumentos con que Hervás rechaza el nombre de Tonocotés dado por Machoni á sus Lules.

La verdad es que el mismo padre Machoni se abstiene de dar prueba alguna que confirme su aserto, de que sus Tonocotés eran Lules y Lules sus Toconotès.

Cuando llegue á tratar de las lenguas, haré ver que no es fácil que el Lule de Machoni sea el Tonocotè de los misioneros; pero por el momento, si me he de atener á la prueba histórica, debo confesar que en vista de lo que dice Jolis y de la argumentación de Hervás, ni por un sólo momento podemos admitir que los tales Tonocotés y Mataráes sean Lules. Antes de conocer lo que Jolis y Hervás escribían en contra de la hipótesis de Machoni, ya tenía yo mis dudas acerca de los fundamentos en que descansaba la relación del Padre autor.

Larsen en su introducción á la edición que publicó del Lule (p. 24) dice lo siguiente: «El P. Machoni había trabajado nueve años en la misión de Miraflores, en tiempo de D. Esteban Urizar de Arespocochega, y es natural que su palabra parezca más fehaciente que la de los críticos posteriores.»

Este argumento tendría más fuerza si el P. Machoni se hubiese expresado de una manera terminante, y si no hubiese confesado que sólo quedaba la noticia del arte que compuso el P. Bárcena.

De la relación de Machoni se desprende que su calificativo de Tonocoté era una adivinanza, un *obiter dictum* sin valor alguno si lo comparamos con las apretadas razones expuestas por Jolis y Hervás: aquel tan misionero como Machoni y mejor Etnólogo, este tan jesuita como el Padre que critica, y mejor Filólogo.

El Padre Machoni sólo buscaba el mejor medio de evangelizar Indios; Hervás levantaba un monumento de lingüística.

Un punto parece que se ha escapado á los que han tratado de la materia: Hervás llama *Toconotés* á los *Tonocotés*. sin duda con sobrada razón para ello, pero algo se nos debió decir á propósito de la consiguiente metátesis de las palabras *co* y *no*.

Sobre este punto volveré después que haya reproducido los autores de la época moderna, porque el testimonio de estos arroja alguna luz sobre el particular, y hasta donde se pueda quiero cortar repeticiones.

Techo y Lozano no pudieron equivocarse al escribir *Tonocotés*, tampoco pudo inventar Hervás su trasliteración *toconotés*. La verdad del caso es probable que se resuelva de este modo:

To—ó Toco	}	+	{ nocotès ó noctés ó notés

es decir que los prefijos *to* y *toco* sirven para determinar las radicales *nocotés* ó *notés*.

En esto de nombres de indios lo primero que hay que averiguar es ¿ quièn se los aplicó ? y lo segundo ¿cuál es el nombre con que ellos mismos se designan ? Ahí está ese nombre *Guaycurú* un simple apodo aplicado por las tribus guaranizantes á los Indios malos del Chaco, á varias lenguas, etc., — y que no se hallará en ningún vocabulario ; porque la voz *Guaycurú* es un tema compuesto, y buscarlo sería pretender encontrar la voz *malito* en un Diccionario Castellano. La raíz es *ai* — bellaco — y con ella y varios afijos conocidos se forma el tema *Guaycurú*.

XV.

Los Mataguayos.

El año 1884 el R. P. Alejandro María Covrado en colaboración con otro misionero publicó en Florencia unas Noticias Históricas del Colegio Franciscano de Tarija y otras Misiones, y en el apéndice L encontramos una relación muy importante acerca de los Mataguayos que reproduzco al pié de la letra : — p. 535, etc. :

« Los Mataguayos cubren una vasta zona del Gran Chaco, y especialmente las riberas izquierdas del Bermejo, y las derechas del Pilcomayo. En la frontera de Salta llámanlos comunmente *Matacos*, y en la de Tarija *Noctenes*, corrupción de Octenai ; nom-

bre que les dán los Chiriguanos, y que parece ser igualmente corrupción de *Huenneyei*, (1) que es el nombre con que los Mataguayos se llaman á sí mismos. Daremos en epílogo la relación que de los usos y costumbres de estas tribus muy agrestas hizo un misionero de este Colegio, que permaneció muchos años entre ellos.

« En las facciones y el color los Mataguayos, Matacos ó Noctenes, pues son la misma cosa, poco se diferencian de los Chiriguanos : pero mucho en las costumbres, y totalmente en el idioma. Sus pueblos son pequeños, constando por lo común tan solo de las diversas ramas de una misma familia. No les gusta formarlos en sitios escacampados ; prefieren siempre la espesura de los cañaverales y bosques. Las habitaciones son unas chozitas formadas de ramas ó cañas plantadas en el suelo, dobladas y reunidas en las puntas, y cubiertas de paja. En lo interior son parecidas á un horno ; tienen menos de dos metros de altura, y la capacidad, proporcionada al número de individuos, que las habitan. La cama es el suelo, ó desnudo, ó cubierto de una estera de enea ó de alguna piel. Limpieza ninguna. Cuando el sitio se llena de pulgas, ó de otros insectos é inmundicias queman sus chocitas y á no mucha distancia construyen otras.

« Las mejores piezas de su ajuar son un morterito de palo santo, y unos cantarillos de barro con boca muy angosta y dos asitas, que les sirven de cantimploras en sus frecuentes correrías.

« Hombres y mujeres igualmente rapan del todo la cabeza. Para ello usan de la afilada mandíbula de un pescado; así como de sus propios dientes para cortarse las uñas. Cúbrense como mejor pueden desde la cintura hasta las rodillas. Los hombres, como por gala, usan llevar tambien una especie de cota ó juboncillo sin mangas, y pendiente del hombro á su lado una bolsa, en la que guardan su tosca pipa de palo, lo necesario para prender fuego, y otras varias baratijas. Así la bolsa como la cota son de punto, hechas con hilos de pita ó chaguar y curiosamente dibujadas. Arráncanse la barba, las pestañas y cejas : ya por gala, ó por hacerse formidables en la guerra, tiznan con carbon molido el rostro y el pecho.

« Su alimento predilecto es el pescado ; y en falta de él toda fruta ó raiz silvestre, que no sea venenosa. Los frutos principales, que les suministran comida casi la cuarta parte del año, y de los que suelen hacer algún corto acopio, son los del algarrobo, chañar y mistol. Comen tambien sin repugnancia lagartos, langostas, gri-

(1) Plural de palabra que expresa - *hombres*. (J. Pelleschi.)

llos, ratones, y aun los huevos despues de abandonados por la chueca, con otras varias inmundicias. El pescado y cualquiera otras carnes y raices las comen asadas ó cocidas: no conocen otro modo de aderezar sus viandas. Aguantan admirablemente el hambre, y cuando no pueden conseguir otra comida, la pasan echados, mascando cualquiera yerba ú hoja del monte.

« De la algarroba hacen un licor para ellos deliciosísimo, que los embriaga y pone bravísimos. Las borracheras acaban casi siempre en una feroz pelea, que tendría funestos resultados, si las mujeres, que nunca beben de aquel licor, no tuviesen el cuidado de esconder las flechas y cualquiera otra arma ofensiva, y de contener y apartar á los peleadores.

« Cuando la algarroba empieza á amarillear, plantan en medio de las chozas, el *pimpin*, que es un tronco cóncavo en la parte superior, y retobado con un cuero. Un titiritero ceñido con una pretina, de la cual cuelga una porción de conchitas, caracolejos, pezuñas, cuernecitos, muelas y semejantes juguetillos, toca sin pausa dia y noche, el rústico tamborete, haciendo al mismo tiempo con el continuo agitar del cuerpo sonar las sonajillas pendientes de su cinto, y acompañándolo todo con su canto, ó más bien con un grito lúgubre y agudo, que se oye á mucha distancia. Esta ridícula función no es simplemente una demostración de regocijo, sino tambien, en opinión de ellos, un rito obligatorio para apresurar la maduración de la apetecida y benéfica legumbre.

« Cuando una mujer llega del monte cargada de frutas, raices ú otros comestibles, se agolpan luego á su choza todas las demás mujeres del pueblo; y aquella despues de haber apartado lo suficiente para el sustento de su familia, les reparte lo restante, sin que las que lo reciben desplieguen sus labios, ni den la menor señal de agradecimiento. Si no les diera, causaría el mayor disgusto, y aún provocaría alguna riña peligrosa.

« Los mataguayos son tímidos y cobardes, pero en extremo vengativos. Jamás olvidan el agravio; tarde ó temprano lo vengarán. Es inquebrantable para ellos la ley del talion. Rehuyen el hacer la guerra, pero si se les hace, se defienden. Su arma ordinaria es la flecha.

« No reconocen autoridad ni ley. El hijo obedece á sus padres, si quiere: estos, aunque amen mucho á sus hijos, no tienen sobre ellos poder alguno. Sin embargo, no se nota por lo general falta de respeto á los viejos, ni á los desgraciados.

« Los hombres se ocupan en la pesca; rarísima vez se divierten con la caza. Sus trabajos agrícolas se reducen á sembrar unas cuantas matas de zapallos y sandías. Con el zumo de estas hacen aloja. Ocúpanse tambien algunos en labrar cordeles de pita con que forman sus redes.

« Los otros trabajos tiene que hacerlos todos la mujer. Ella debe no solo aderezar la comida, sino tambien buscar y acarrear las frutas y raices del monte; no solo traer el agua, sino tambien hacer la leña; no solo cuidar del aseo de la choza, sinó tambien fabricarla. En una palabra es una esclava.

« En llegando una muchacha á la nubilidad, la ocultan en un rincon de la choza, tapándola con ramos y trapos, sin que le sea lícito por un determinado tiempo hablar con nadie ni gustar carne ó pescado. Entre tanto un tamborilero delante de su choza practica la cerimonia usada para la maduración de la algarroba.

« Los desposorios no tienen especial solemnidad. No usan casarse con consanguíneos cercanos, pero muy de grado con los cuñados. Aunque ordinariamente se casen con los de su nación, no se les impide hacerlo con los de otra, y especialmente con los tobas. La autoridad paterna no tiene intervención alguna con el matrimonio de sus hijos; estos lo contraen como, cuando y con quien quieren. La mujer exige en el novio que sea buen pescador, y este en aquella que no sea muy casera, sino amiga de andar por el campo buscando comestibles.

« Verificado secretamente el matrimonio; se retiran los novios por unos cinco ó seis días al monte: y en volviendo al pueblo, cohabitan públicamente en la choza que mejor les plazca, aunque lo general es que la novia vaya á vivir en la de sus suegros.

« La poligamia es rarísima, apenas se encuentra quien tenga simultáneamente dos mujeres: pero no reconocen la indisolubilidad conyugal; fácilmente se divorcian los jóvenes; más dificilmente los hombres maduros, aunque basta un capricho para hacerlo sin escrúpulo. El adulterio es reputado delito, y no es muy frecuente. Es infalible que la mujer legítima se vengue de la adúltera, yendo públicamente á su cabaña, riñiéndola con rabiosos gritos, y estropeándola á palos en presencia de todo el pueblo, que curioso acude haciendo befa.

« En la preñéz, la mujer no se tiene consideración alguna. Despues del parto yace algunos días sobre la arena, y entre tanto su marido se abstiene de la pesca, y de cualquiera otra ocupación.

«Las madres son muy cariñosas en criar á sus hijos. Cuando pequeñuelos rara vez los sueltan, y en medio de las embarazosas faenas domésticas y de sus cotidianas correrías campestres, los llevan metidos en una ancha faja trasversal, que usan á manera de banda. Cuando más grandecillos los llevan cabalgados sobre uno de sus hombros. A los dos ó tres años les ponen nombres.

«El aborto es muy frecuente, particularmente entre las solteras, y lo procuran dándose, ó haciéndose dar golpes en el vientre. Más raro es el infanticidio, pero no tanto que no den más de una vez la muerte á un tierno niño de pecho, para que, enterrado junto al cadáver de su madre, reciba de ésta la leche.

«Como en todas las tribús de esta América, hay entre nuestros mataguayos unos médicos ó brujos, que llaman *yegu*. Son temidos y respetados. Los que quieren iniciarse en esta profesión, se retiran algunos días al despoblado, ayunan rigurosamente y andan corriendo día y noche. Su modo de curar es inclinarse con todo su cuerpo sobre el paciente, que está recostado en el suelo; poner sobre la parte dolorida ambas manos á guisa de tubo, y aplicando á ellas la boca soplar con toda su fuerza emitiendo al mismo tiempo unos roncos mujidos. En esta operación perseveran largas horas, y noches enteras. En pago se les dá todo lo que piden, bien que el doliente quede en cueros; más si éste no sana los parientes exigen la devolución. Cuando hay alguna epidemia en el pueblo, ó en los circunvecinos se reunen todos los *yegus*, y sentándose á corta distancia de las rancherías con la cara vuelta hacia ellas, prorumpen en un melancólico canto, acompañado del son de unas calabacillas, provistas de piedrecitas, que agitan al mismo tiempo: y con esto creen ahuyentar la peste, ó impedir su entrada.

«Enfermedad común entre los mataguayos es la sarna y la que hace mayores estragos es la pleuresia. Luego que enferman, se rrapan la cabeza, y llaman al *yegu*. Cuando el enfermo empieza á agonizar, lo llevan al lugar en que han de sepultarlo, y allí para librarlo de las congojas de la agonía, lo ahogan. El cadáver, no tendido, sino medio incorporado, lo colocan en una hoya poco profunda y después de cubierto can ramas y yerbas, le echan tierra.

Al regresar del entierro rompen todos los utensilios que fueron del difunto; deshacen su choza, y la trasladan á otro sitio; ó

por lo menos tapan la puerta, por donde pasó el ser llevado á la sepultura. Cada pueblo tiene un enterratorio común, y siempre á muy corta distancia.

«Los parientes del finado, en la noche siguiente al entierro, se reunen al rededor de la sepultura, y celebran las exequias con lúgubres clamoreos, y tocando sus *pimpines*. Por algun tiempo se abstienen del pescado y cualesquiera otras carnes.

«Tienen idea del alma que llaman *Neuseh*, y creen que sobreviviendo al cuerpo, trasmigen en el de alguna bestia segun los méritos de la vida. Reconocen también con el nombre de *Ohott-at* (1) (grande espíritu) á un ser superior que los crió; pero no le dan culto alguno. Temen mucho á un génio maléfico, que vagando de noche hace daño al hombre; por lo cual lo llaman *Onnescilele* (2) (noctivago), y se le encomiendan para hacérselo propicio.

XVI.

Observaciones al capítulo anterior.

Los apuntes del apendice L. escritos por el P. Alejandro M. Corrado están llenos de materias interesantes para este tratado. Allí establece que «Matacos, Mataguayos y *Noctenes* son la misma cosa» esplicando que en Salta los llaman *Matacos*, en Tarija *Noctenes*, mientras que entre si los Mataguayos se dicen *Huenneyei*.

Segun el buen Padre el nombre de *Noctenes* es corrupción del otro *Octenai* con que los Chiriguayos designan á estos Indios. Me hallo sin preparación para discutir este punto del orígen de la voz *Noctenes*: pero desde que los Tobas y Guaycurúes deben á los Guaraníes los apodos por los cuales los conocemos nosotros, nada de extraño tendria que otro tanto sucediese en este caso también.

De esta relación se desprende que no todos llaman *Noctenes* á los Mataguayos, y se comprende que á ello se debe la pérdida de la nación *Tonocoté*, nombre limitado á ciertas tribus, pero que sin duda se hizo extensivo á muchas, en cuanto al idioma, por ser el primero que aprendieron los Misioneros, y por que les servia para catequizar á todos los de la misma familia.

El Padre Cardús escribe *Noctenes* de suerte que la *c* intrusa participa en algo de ese sonido que los Mocovíes aumentan á toda

(1) *O'hot*=espiritud: *tát* y *táj*=aumentativo. (J. P.)

(2) *Onne* (hunat)=noche: *sci*=locativo; *léle*=patronimico. (J. P.)

t medial (ver el arte Mocoví Fonología). Por medio de esta variante comprendemos que á los Matacos Mataguayos tan puede llamárseles *Noctenes* como *Notenes*.

Así como suena el nombre *Tonocoté* yo diría que es el otro *Noctenes* ó *Notenes* con el prefijo Chaquense y muy Mataco *to*-el ó los. La *n* final es un recurso del castellano para indicar nacionalidad. Así también decimos *Tobas* cuando la raíz es *obá*—cara—porque la lengua Guaraní expresa todos sus sustantivos etc. con un prefijo demostrativo de relación que puede ser *t*, *r* etc.

Hervas habla de *Toconotés*, Techo y otros de *Tonocotés*. Yo comprendo que la diferencia debe explicarse así:—que *Noté* es igual á *Nocoté*, y que los prefijos *To* y *Toco* también son iguales mediante la degeneración conocida *Toco Toho To*, porque aún cuando el *Nocten* y *Noten* sean una sola cosa el calificativo que precede puede no serlo en ambos casos.

Mientras no se presente explicación más verosímil ni se produzca alguna en contrario reclamo identidad de valor léxico para las voces *Tonocoté*, *Toconoté*, *Nocten* y *Noten*.

Todo estudiante de las lenguas guaraníticas y del Chaco tiene que confesar que la *t* y el *to* no pasánse de ser prefijos demostrativos. No por esto niego que el *Toco* pueda tener un valor más concreto, como ser—Colorado, el rio Tenco, etc. Lo que importa es que se admita que los *Noctenes* ó *Notenes* pueden ser los *To-nocotés* de la historia. Ello explicaría todas las contradiciones que se advierten en los textos de Machoni, Jolís y Hervas.

No se concibe que una nación tan fuerte como la Tonocoté haya desaparecido en medio de tanto que se ha conservado. Era la tribu típica de los Matacos, Mataguayos, Mataraes etc., que la tradición cuenta que se había expatriado á la cuenca del Pilcomayo: allí encontramos á Noctenes ó Notenes, que son Matacos y Mataguayos: nos vemos pues en el caso de confesar que estos ludios son más ó menos los Tonocotés de la historia, y que el nombre se había perdido, porque era un apodo impuestos por naciones vecinas que más tarde dejaron de usarlo. Hoy se ha vuelto á encontrar porque los Misioneros han vuelto á esas Misiones de la parte de los Chiriguanos y han adoptado el nombre con que estos acostumbraban apellidarlos.

Si se tratase de un nombre de orígen propio, acaso así podría admitirse cierta latitud de trasliteración; pero, siendo como son,

apodos inventados por otros indios oídos y trascritos por los Españoles todo cabe; y no es una hipótesis violenta pretender que los Noctenes del P. Corrado sean los Tonocotés del P. Techo.

Parece que no estará de más hacer notar que los indios que nosotros llamamos Tobas, se dan á sí mismos el calificativo de *Tocouitt*, y este comparado con el otro *Mocouitt* deja un resíduo *Toco*, que muy bien podría compararse con el *Toco* ó *Tó* de los indios de que se trata en este capítulo. En el Toba y otras lenguas hermanas la C, es sonido falso y la sincopación de sílabas es la regla.

XVII.

Lo que, dice el P. Cardús de Matacos, Mataguayos etc.

El R. P. Fr. José Cardús, publicó el año 1886 en Barcelona su obra titulada «Las Misiones Franciscanas,» de Bolivia, en conección con el Colegio de San José de Tarata, en que hallamos las siguientes noticias sobre los Matacos (p. p. 250 á 258) que reproduzco exponiéndome al cargo de prolijo por demás: mi disculpa será su importancia, pues los Misioneros son los que escriben con ciencia y conciencia, de lo que ven y han conocido intimamente.

Yo no he visto ni conozco á los Matacos, recelo dejarme llevar por ideas preconcebidas, desde luego me es forzoso reproducir y no glosar mis autores que así dirán lo que ellos dicen y no lo que otro quiere que digan.

Desde la conquista se puede decir que debemos á los P. P. Misioneros, lo que sabemos de los indios en sus ramificaciones é idiomas y cuanto se escriba acerca de los hombres que los españoles encontraron en nuestro Continente, debe hacerse con especial referencia á los trabajos de estos beneméritos soldados de Cristo.

« Los Matacos son conocidos también con los nombres de Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis, (1) y otros según los lugares. Todos con muy poca diferencia, hablan la misma lengua y las costumbres son casi las mismas. Se extienden por la parte occidental del chaco central y austral, ocupando principalmente ambas márgenes del río Bermejo y la derecha del Pilcomayo.

(1) No se confundan con los Chunupi—Vilelas.

El número de dichos indios será de unos veinte mil, de los cuales unos están ya en relaciones con los cristianos fronterizos entre quienes pasan una temporada cada año, trabajando en sus haciendas, y otros viven completamente aislados de los blancos, á quienes consideran como enemigos, y no sin razón, principalmente á los argentinos, quienes desde algunos años á esta parte han seguido el sistema de desalojarlos de sus lugares, perseguirlos y exterminarlos. Es probable, pues, que dentro de algunos años los Matacos habrán sufrido un cambio muy notable en su modo de ser, y su número habrá disminuído. Como quiera que sea los Matacos hoy día todavía componen una tribú bastante numerosa y que bajo ciertos respectos se distingue de las demás.

« El Mataco es de estatura regular, algo delgado; su color cobrizo oscuro; el carácter muy apático, reservado y desconfiado, su mirada sospechosa y traicionera; grosero en sus modales; asqueroso y repugnante en su fisonomía y persona. Por instinto es ladrón, y también roba porque lo cree un deber; es sufrido y guerrero, ocioso y sucio por costumbre, y por naturaleza es cobarde y vengativo. Corto de entendimiento como es, nadie puede ver en él ni un rasgo de aquella viveza, agreste sí, pero inteligente y natural, que es común á los individuos de las demás tribús que le rodean; ni siquiera se le puede conceder la astucia, á pesar de ser ratero. Todos admiran en ellos la aparente insensibilidad con que reciben los agravios, lo mismo que la sangre fría con que clavan un par de puñaladas á otro y se las dejan clavar.

« Las armas son flechas, lanza, y macana, y los que no pueden conseguir lanzas de hierro, ponen un asta de ciervo en la punta de un palo. Las ocupaciones se reducen á cazar un poco; á pescar, para lo cual en algunos puntos acostumbran hacer redes de hilo de garabata; recoger algunas frutas silvestres, y después en hacer nada. Por esto su comida consiste en un poco de carne de animales silvestres, pescado y frutas; éstas empero, durante algunos meses, aunque no muy variadas, suelen cogerlas en abundancia, principalmente del chañar, del mistol, y del algarrobo; el pescado es también abundante y durante algunos meses; la caza no abunda tanto pero ellos comen con placer cualquiera otra cosa que se parezca á carne, como lagartijas, grillos, langostas y ratones (1); de manera que aunque en ciertos meses se ponen muy flacos, por poca comida, con todo nadie se muere de hambre. Algunos, pero

(1) Es decir: *conejitos de cerco*, que son muy buenos cuando gordos (J.P.)

pocos, crían ovejas, y otros animales domésticos. De todos modos, en casos muy apurados, y sin ser tan apurados, los cristianos fronterizos tienen bastantes estancias de ganado vacuno, ganado que frecuentemente saca de apuro á los matacos en tiempo de hambre, y esto sin mucho trabajo. Los más tambien suelen no cultivar porque esto costaría mucho trabajo (para los matacos) sino sembrar simplemente zapallo, artículos que se dá muy bien en todos aquellos lugares, habiéndolos tan apropósitos, que sin sembrarlos se reproducen con increíble facilidad y en tanta abundancia y de tan buena calidad, que, para ponderarlo, algunos fronterizos me decían que eran tan ricos que era un gusto verlos y probarlos, y que su melosidad era tanta que, cuando querían partirlos, el cuchillo se quedaba pegado en ellos; de manera que, cuando me referían semejante maravilla, observaba que hasta ellos mismos se les hacía saliva la boca, y á mi casi me hacían venir ganas de irme á vivir en unos lugares en donde se reproducían tan espontánemente y en tanta abundancia *tan ricos y tan melifluos zapallos*.

« De las frutas silvestres, y aún de los zapallos y sandías, hacen una bebida, fermentada que les gusta mucho pero los embriaga malamente; y en sus furias, traban mutuamente unas contiendas muy sangrientas: motivo porque las mujeres se abstienen completamente de semejante bebida, y también para esconder las armas de sus maridos en los momentos en que la bebida los exalta demasiado y pone furiosos, evitando así muchas heridas y muertes que no obstante son frecuentes.

« La fruta de que más ordinariamente se sirven para hacer sus bebidas, es la del algarrobo; fruta bastante dulce y nutritiva, y tal vez la más abundante en aquéllos lugares. Cuando se va acercando el tiempo de dicha fruta, parece que se le acerca el tiempo de la vida, del contento y del placer; y por esto procuran ellos anticiparse mediante alguna demostración que sirva como de amonestación para que todos se preparen á la próxima llegada del venturoso y suspirado tiempo.

« Al efecto cuando las vainas del algarrobo empiezan á amarillear, ponen delante de las chosas un mortero de palo, cubierto con una piel medio curtida de oveja ó de otro animal. Uno de ellos, con un pedazo de cuerda ó de cuero ceñido á la cintura, del cual penden una porción de conchas, caracoles, cuernos y huesos pequeños, y otras cosas que pueden hacer algún pequeño ruído, se

pone á golpear con un palillo dicho mortero, que ellos llaman *pimpin* y que hace el oficio de tamboril; acompañando los golpes del *pimpin* con varios movimientos del cuerpo, como medio bailando, pero sin moverse del lugar, haciendo de manera que lo objetos que lleva colgados á la cintura produzcan el ruído de unas sonajas de huesos ó de algunas nueces vacías; cantando al mismo tiempo en voz alta, pero con una tonada triste y monótona: diríase que temen alguna gran calamidad ó que piden socorro en un gran conflicto. Ello es que de día y de noche sin cesar, se han de hacer oír los golpes sordos y apagados del *pimpin*, y los débiles choques de la silvestre sonaja y los gritos ó lamentos del afligido cantor: y esto, según dicen para hacer que la fruta deseada madure más pronto y mejor. Por esto cuando se cansa el que toca y canta, inmediatamente se pone otro en su lugar.

« Las casas de los matacos son demasiadamente pequeñas é incómodas, pero por esto las hacen ellos; pues así ahorran tiempo y fatiga, prefiriendo la facilidad á la comodidad. Cortan, pues, un par de bejucos medianos ó de ramas delgadas, las plantan en el suelo doblados y en forma de dos arcos cruzados, amarran en ellos unos cuantos manojos de paja, y la casa está hecha, dejando una abertura angosta y baja como para pasar por ella á gatas: presentando el todo la figura de un horno de dos ó tres varas de diámetros con sus correspondiente boca. Si el cortar un par de ramas les parece muy difícil, entonces cortan unas cuantas cañas, las plantan ligeramente en el suelo y en un círculo mal trazado; juntan los extremos, los atan con cualquiera cosa, ponen un poco de paja en cima, y ya tienen una casa que parece un embudo con la boca abajo. Allí dentro viven aquellos seres privilegiados, con más libertad y tranquilidad que los reyes en sus soberbios palacios, allí hacen fuego y comen; allí duermen los hombres y mujeres con sus padres y abuelos, con sus hijos y nietos, y siempre en compañía de algunos perros, sobre el simple suelo ó sobre una estera de juncos que han crecido allí mismo, ó sobre un cuero de jabalí que han cazado, ó de vaca que han robado, todos juntos, y unos casi encima de otros, este con la cabeza sobre el pecho de aquél, aquél con los piernas sobre el pecho de otros, y los perros encima de cualquiera cuya posición se preste mejor. Así sus miserables chozas no tardan en llenarse de insectos y entonces les prenden fuego y hacen otras en otro lugar: de manera que siempre extrenan casas

nuevas, porque las que hacen son siempre provisorias. Además de que nunca habitan mucho tiempo una misma choza, por la costumbre que tienen de trasladarse á pasar temporadas, ya en un punto, ya en otro, según los tiempos y estaciones, como por ejemplo: en tiempo de pescado se pasan semanas y meses trasladándose continuamente de un punto del río á otro, del río á algun arroyo, del arroyo á alguna laguna; en tiempo de frutas hacen lo mismo.

« Con todo, como son poco aficionados al baño y andan siempre muy sucios, y duermen siempre amontanados y entre perros, casi todos están llenos de sarna, enfermedad que hasta mata á muchas criaturas. Muchos de ellos, si alguna vez se bañan, estando el cuerpo bien mojado aún, tienen el gusto de revolcarse en la arena del rio, ó bien entre la ceniza que tienen en sus chozas, semejantes á ciertos animales á quienes hace falta la inmundicia. En ciertos días y tiempos, se tiznan el pecho y la cara con carbon, y esto para parecer mejor ó hacer ver que están de fiesta.

« Todos se cortan el cabello con un cuchillo ó con dientes de pescado, y esto por falta de tijeras, instrumento que por otra parte seria de un uso demasiado limitado para ellos. Tambien acostumbran agujerearse las orejas, para llevar en ellas algún pedazo de palo, como un distinguido adorno. Los hombres se arrancan con las uñas el poco pelo que les sale en la barba, y algunos se arrancan tambien las cejas y pestañas.

« Hombres y mujeres visten muy sencillamente, esto es, se ponen en la cintura un pedazo de cualquiera cosa, como un pedzao de cuero, de lienzo ó de red que les llega hasta las rodillas, ó un poco menos. Algunos hombres de mejor gusto á veces se ponen una especie de chaleco tejido á mano con hilo de garavata y pintado: siendo del mismo material y hecha del mismo modo la bolsa que suelen llevar colgada al lado, en la que, cuando andan, guardan su eslabon y pedernal, ó el hilo y cera para las flechas y otras cositas de su uso. En sus casas á lo menos de noche, están sin vestido, tal vez por no echarlo á perder.

« Inútil es buscar entre ellos jefes ó capitanes que representen alguna autoridad, porque entre ellos no hay quien manda ni quien obedece, solo respetan amistosamente y siguen á veces el consejo de alguno que tiene cierto prestigio entre ellos, ó que se hace querer más. En tiempo de guerra ó de peligro común, algunos hacen sus convenios limitados entre algunos ranchos solamente, por falta de unión.

« Para casarse parecen que lo hacen sin ceremonia alguna y sin cumplimiento de ninguna clase, ni los padres intervienen en el matrimonio de sus hijos, quienes se casan cuando quieren y con quien les parece mejor ; solo que la mujer prefiere siempre á uno que sea buen pescador y el hombre busca á una que sea diligente y activa para ir á buscar frutas : y cuando han convenido entre sí se retiran ambos al bosque durante unos pocos días, haciendo lo que les dá la gana, volviendo despues al rancho á formar su choza aparte, ó á vivir en casa de los suegros de la mujer. Pocos son los que tienen más de una mujer, aun cuando, principalmente entre jóvenes, sea frecuente el divorcio. Tambien parece ser raro el adulterio ; y las mujeres tampoco consienten que otras se hagan querer de sus maridos, de lo contrario van á sus casas á insultarlas, reñirlas y amenazarlas ; cosa que frecuentemente sirve de diversión á hombres, mujeres y muchachos del mismo rancho quienes salen todos de sus casas para ver los gestos y ademanes que recíprocamente se hacen, y reirse á carcajadas y celebrando con mucha algazara y placer los apodos y disparates que mútuamente se prodigan, y los bofetones y puntapies que se dan con muy poca gracia.

« Inútil sería exigir creencias religiosas de gente tan infeliz, por no decir estúpida. Parece no obstante que tiene idea del alma, que llaman *neusec*, pero cuyo destino no saben distintamente. Tambien tienen una confusa idea de un ser superior y grande, que en su lengua llaman *ohott-at* (otros pronuncian *hojot-taj)* y significa *grande espíritu*, pero no le prestan ningún culto. Unos parece más bien que tienen miedo á no sé que fantasma que anda de noche y hace mal á la gente, y que llaman *onnexilele* : otros parece que rinden cierto culto supersticioso á un ser misterioso, que llaman *taj-juat*, que quiere decir *oculto* ; pero sin templo, ni lugar, ni tiempo determinado para rendirle sus homenajes ; solo sé que en tiempo de luna nueva, algunos suelen reunirse para cantar y bailar, y los brujos, que llaman ellos, hacen alguna truhanería, haciendo disfrazar á alguno para que haga el oficio del *taj-juat*, quien, saliendo del bosque en traje extraño y fingiendo la voz, infunde miedo á los expectadores, á quienes predice los tiempos y sucesos futuros.

« Pero si los Matacos no tienen religión ninguna, no por eso dejan de conservar alguna superstición. Por ejemplo, cuando una muchácha llega á la pubertad, tiene que estar retirada durante

cierto tiempo en un rincón de la choza, tapada con ramas ó cualquiera otra cosa, sin hablar con nadie, y sin comer ni carne ni pescado. Y mientres permanece invisible é incomunicada, uno de los ceremonieros del rancho tiene que estar tocando el *pimpin* delante de la choza. Cuando una mujer pare tiene que estar echada algunos días, y el marido durante mucho tiempo tiene que abstenerse completamente de toda ocupación y trabajo. Alguna vez se ha sorprendido á alguna mujer bailando alrededor de una hoguera, en la que había echado á su hijo difunto.

« Tampoco faltan entre ellos los que llaman brujos, sujetos, por supuesto, los más astutos, pero los más temidos y respetados, y que hacen el oficio de curanderos y de sacerdotes. Para pertenecer al número de los que ejercen tan importante y útil profesión, basta que uno quiera y se sienta fuertemente inspirado; pero antes es preciso que se aparte algunos días de la gente y se retire al bosque, ayunando rigurosamente y andando día y noche como un loco, sin rumbo ni dirección, por aquellos lugares; presentándose despues pálido, sucio, flaco, y con los ojos espantados como uno que está fuera de sí. Desde entonces ya es considerado como un sujeto privilegiado que ha tenido comunicaciones secretas con el *oculto*, dotado de un poder sobrenatural para deshacer hechizos y arrojar maléficios de los cuerpos de los enfermos, supuesta entre ellos la creencia general de que nadie enferma ni muere por causas puramente naturales. De manera que cuando uno cae enfermo ó siente algun dolor, al momento llama al brujo que le quite el dolor ó le restituya la salud. Y no se crea que el brujo tenga que tomar el pulso, ni hacer sacar la lengua, ni confundir al enfermo y parientes con tantas preguntas como suelen hacer nuestros médicos, no; esto para ello sería manifestar demasiada ignorancia y además sería una cosa por demás impertinente, ni tampoco se devanan los sesos para descubrir la causa de la enfermedad, ni menos quieren saber si hay yerbas ó remedios especiales para cambatirla; nada de todo eso: sería tiempo perdido. Su modo de curar es más sencillo. Habiendo dicho el enfermo que tal ó cual parte le duele, el brujo no hace más que poner las manos sobre la parte dolorida, pero las pone juntas y medio cerradas, de modo que forman como un tubo, ni más ni menos como cuando los muchachos con la mano medio cerrada quieren imitar el ruido de una trompeta ó de un cuerno; y con las manos en dicha forma, empiezan á soplar por

ellas con toda la fuerza de sus pulmones, acompañando los soplidos con gemidos y aullidos, perseverando horas enteras así, repitiendo la ceremonia con mayor ó menor frecuencia conforme al estado del enfermo y la posibilidad de pagar el trabajo. Los que nada tienen, tienen que dar algo al brujo; los que tienen algo, deben resolverse á dárselo todo, y se lo dan. Algunos sin embargo, parecen que dudan ó á lo menos desconfian de la habilidad del brujo; porque, aunque anticipadamente le dan todo cuanto pide, se hacen empero restituir despues lo que le habían dado si la curación no tiene efecto. El más afortunado en el restablecimiento de los enfermos es el que adquiere más prestigio, y le vá mejor. Si los enfermos empeoran, y ven que vá á morir ordinariamente le desahucian y abandonan, á fin de no perder el crédito; excusándose con lo incurable de la enfermedad por la oposición ó contrariedad secreta que le hace algún maléfico de superior virtud. Muchas veces si el que desahucia al enfermo es un brujo de prestigio, los parientes sacan afuera al paciente le llevan vivo al panteón, cavan el hoyo, ahogan al enfermo y le entierran. Cuando, empero, enferma muy gravemente ó está para morir alguno que entre ellos hace las veces de capitán, ó que tiene mucha influencia ó parentela, ó que se ha atraido una simpatía general, entonces suele haber consulta ó junta general de todos los brujos del lugar, quienes nunca le dán la sentencia de muerte, antes bien se esfuerzan en hacer alarde de todas sus ridiculeces y niñerías á fin de hacer alejar de él la muerte. Reunidos, pues, en la choza del enfermo, puestos á su lado á cierta distancia y en semicírculo, no apartan nunca la vista de él, observando muy atentamente todos sus movimientos. Empiezan á soplar y hacer gestos con las manos, ya con fuerza y viveza, ya con lentitud y suavidad, según ven que el enfermo parece más fatigado ó que recobra algún alivio; y todo esto para hacer creer que ven venir la muerte y que ellos procuran hacerla huir. Del mismo modo empiezan á cantar con voz baja y tenebrosa, con una tonada parecida á un continuo y sordo aullido; y conforme ven al enfermo, ellos tambien modifican sus gestos, su ademán y su voz. El enfermo por su parte, con su fatiga, con sus ayes, ó gemidos, con sus ojos azorados é inquietud de su semblante, siempre procura dar á conocer lo que siente, y el estado en que se encuentra; y los brujos á la vez, guiados por tan visibles señales, gesticulan más ó menos, soplan y aullan con mayor ó menor sua-

vidad ó fuerza, ya se acercan y abalanzan bruscamente hacia el enfermo ya retroceden un poco y se apartan suavemente de él. Cuando por momentos parece que el enfermo va á espirar, se acercan tanto y tan bruscamente al enfermo, multiplicando tanto los movimientos de las manos y aullan tan seguidamente y con una voz tan entre cortada, esforzada y ronca, con unos ojos tan abiertos y expantados y con tantos ademanes de pavor, que cualquiera creiría fácilmente que en realidad ven la muerte bajo alguna disforme y terrible figura, y que quieren espantarla, hacerla huir ó agarrar; y todo tan seriamente y con tanta naturalidad, que nadie sospecharia en ellos ficción ó engaño; pero lo cierto es que si el enfermo aún podía vivir algún tiempo, el terror le quita pronto la vida.

«Son tambien los brujos que creen tener poder para ahuyentar y hacer desaparecer las pestes y calamidades, como la viruela, que hace estragos entre ellos; la falta de agua ó su exceso, y otras: al efecto reúnense los brujos, se retiran á poca distancia de los ranchos, y sentados en tierra, como otros tantos Jeremías, empiezan á cantar en tono de lamento, sin decir nada por supuesto, acompañando el triste canto con el *choc-que-choc*, producido por el choque de unas piedrecitas contenida dentro de una calabaza hueca que tienen en la mano y sacuden como para señalar el compás.

«Entierran muy superficialmente á los muertos contentándose con abrir un hoyo pequeño, en el que ponen el cadáver medio incorporado, con unas ramitas debajo y encima, y un poco de tierra, de manera que muchas veces los tigres se ceban con los cadáveres. A veces ponen una tinajilla de agua en el hoyo para refrijerio del difunto. También suelen quemar algunos objetos que habían sido de su uso, lo mismo que la choza. Pero los parientes del finado tienen que ir á su sepultura, lamentándose sobre ella y acompañando los lamentos con el *pimpin*. Los lamentos, segun los lugares, se repiten por algunos días. Tienen además otras costumbres que han recibido de los Tobas, con quienes se emparientan y de quienes son amigos.

«Se vé, pues, que la tribu mataca es una tribu bien desgraciada en la actualidad. Su modo de vivir y sus costumbres, por otra parte y las circunstancias de los tiempos en que estamos y los lugares que habita, no permiten por ahora asegurarle un halagüeño porvenir. Ciertamente no se puede decir que los Matacos que viven en territorrio boliviano sean enemigos declarados de los

blancos ó Cristianos, antes bién algunos suelen por algun tiempo prestarles algun servicio, y se dicen y quieren ser tenidos por amigos de ellos, á pesar de que semejante amistad parece fingida, sirviéndose de ella para poder robar mejor ó con mayor disimulo. Roban el ganado vacuno de los cristianos, le cambian á los Tobas con caballos, y vuelven á cambiar ó vender éstos á los Cristianos por otros objetos que necesitan, haciendo creer que los animales han sido quitados á sus enemigos.

«En frente de la Misión de San Francisco de Pilcomayo, y á la banda del rio, están las ruinas de la Mision de San Antonio, compuesta de Matacos reunidos en 1863, y que despues de haber estado dos ó tres años en Bella Esperanza se trasladaron al último punto, en donde estuvieron, en bastante número, hasta el añs 1879, en la cual fecha se escaparon, aunque anteriormente parte de ellos ya se habian huido y vuelto mas de una vez. Mientras permanecieron en la Mision, poco ó nada se pudo adelantar en ningun sentido, ni aun querian consentir en dejar bautizar á sus hijos pequeños moribundos. El último pretexto para huirse era decir que los blancos vecinos querian matarlos, y parece que asi querían hacerlo: y los Matacos tenian motivo para temerlo, porque no dejaban de entenderse alguna vez con los Tobas para ejecutar algunos robos. Quisieron poco despues volver, al menos algunos, pero los Padres misioneros no se atrevieron admitirlos de nuevo, porque veían claramente que por entónces no podían esperar nada de una gente tan viciada, indolente é inconstante y tambien porque juzgaron prudente acallar las calumnias de los Blancos que no cesaban de decir que los misioneros eran los alcahuetes de dichos Indios á fin de que efectuasen sus robos con mas seguridad. Y sin embargo es un hecho, que tanto los Tobas como los Matacos robaban cien veces menos cuando estaban al lado de los Misioneros, que antes de reunirse y despues que se han huido. Por lo demás hago estas ligeras referencias, para indicar solamente las dificultades, que todavía existen de poder reducir y civilizar á los Matacos; tal vez mas tarde cambiarán las circunstancias, y las dificultades desaparecerán ó disminuirán.»

XVIII.

Observaciones sobre el capítulo anterior.

Según el P. Cardús Matacos son los Mataguayos *Notenes* (sic) Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalaes, Chunupies, etc. No hay que confundir estos *Chunupies* con los *Chulupies* ó Vilelas.

Aquí vemos como los *Noctenes* pueden ser tambien *Notenes*; y curioso sería averiguar como es el dialecto de los Malbalaes y Chunupies.

No me he creído en el deber de acortar las relaciones de los dos Padres Misioneros porque están llenas de datos de interés y siempre desconfío del elemento personal cuando se trata de naciones de Indios sobre los que gravita cierta discordancia en los autores. Si yo pudiese agregar algo de propia cosecha, en cuanto á estos Indios, ya sería otra cosa; pero mi ramo es el de las lenguas y necesitaba comprobantes tan fehacientes como éstos para abonar lo que más tardé se dirá acerca del idioma Mataco y sus codialectos.

Es raro que en las dos últimas relaciones se dé un lugar tan preferente á las tribus *Noctenes* de que nada se dice en los autores del tiempo del Rey. Esto ya en sí hace en favor de la hipótesis que los *Noctenes* pueden ser los *Tonocotés*.

En esta parte del continente no parece que haya habido un exterminio de razas como aquel de los Charruas en la Banda Oriental: desde luego en alguna parte debemos buscar los 60.000 y mas Indios que entendian ó hablaban el tonocoté. Entre ellos estaban los Mataguayos, que existen hasta el dia de hoy, racional pues sería asegurar que el Mataguayo es un dialecto del Tonocoté y desde que el Noctén y el Mataguayo son dialectos hermanos, tan Tonocoté puede ser el Nocten como el Mataguayo.

En el capítulo siguiente reproduciré una relación que me fué remitida por el Padre Eliseo Molina del Colegio Franciscano en Tarija.

XIX.

Lo que dice el Padre Doroteo Giannecchini de los Noctenes y otras tribus Matacas.

«Los Noctenes, los Matacos, los Vejoses, los Guiznaes, los Chulupies, son una sola nacion, que hablan todos una sola lengua y todos tienen las mismas costumbres.

«Tales naciones se diferencian por el nombre y por términos que yo llamaré *provinciales* ó *locales*.

«Nuestros Noctenes, por ejemplo, que son los que habitan al pié de la cordillera del Pisapc hasta unas 50 ó 60 leguas al Este, ó sea, hasta *Piktrenda* se llaman *Noctenes*. Por Pikirenda toman ya el nombre de *Guiznaes*: pero son de la misma familia de nuestros Noctenes, y aun emparentados con ellos.

«De Pikirenda hasta otras 30 leguas mas ó menos para adelante hasta el Paraguay toman el nombre de *Chulupies*; y toda la ribera derecha del Pilcomayo desde nuestra 1ª misión de Noctenes hasta el Paraguay, es la misma Tribu: son de palabras, y costumbres algo diferentes, pero en la sustancia, es la misma lengua; y entre si se entienden perfectamente hablando cada uno su jerigonza.

«Frente á la Colonia Crevaux, en la margen izquierda al Norte. hay otra Tribu llamada *Chorotis* que han de haber sido antiguamente una parcialidad cautivada por los Noctenes ; pues su idioma, es un verdadero dialecto del *Mataco* ó *Noctene* y muchas palabras son iguales á las de los Noctenes.

« Esos *Chorotis* viven en tribu aparte si, pero se hallan emparentados y en continua relación con los Noctenes. Su pronunciación empero es mucho más clara é inteligible que la del Noctene.

« Estos mismos Noctenes, están emparentados con los *Matacos* de Oran y del Chaco; y, allà á los Noctenes los llaman *Matacos*; y los Matacos de la márgen izquierda del rio Oran hasta la Reducción, en donde á principios de este siglo tuvimos una misión, toman el nombre de *Vejoses*, y tienen su provincialismo en hablar el mismo idioma de los Noctenes y Matacos; y más arriba, ó sea en nuestro Itiyuro Boliviano, toman ya de nuevo el nombre de *Matacos*.

« De modo que no tienen idioma distinto propiamente dicho : sino términos más ó menos pronunciados que no constituyen una lengua, ó un idioma por separado, sino un provincialismo, como pasa entre Bolivianos, Argentinos, Chilenos, etc., y entre pueblo y pueblo, entre provincia y provincia. »

Esta descripción se me mandó en contestación á un pedido del *Pater-noster* en Mataguayo habiéndolo recibido ya en Nocten.

Todo lo trascripto en los capítulos anteriores demuestra que para los Padres Misioneros la tribu típica es la Nocten, y que esto dicen ellos donde nosotros hablaríamos de Matacos y Mataguayos. Se comprende pues que *Nocten* no sea más que corruptela del nombre, antes dicho y oido *Tonocote* ó Toconoté.

XX.

Distribución geográfica de las naciones de tipo Mataco.

De todo lo que nos cuentan los PP. de la Compañía y de las Misiones Franciscanas se deduce que las tribus Matacas ocupan una región diagonal que antiguamente se extendía desde la cuenca del Salado (1) hasta la del Pilcomayo, limitada hácia la Sierra por tribus Quichuizantes y otras, y hácia el Litoral del Rio de la Plata, por las naciones de tipo Toba-Guaycurú. Esta vasta zona delimitaba con los Chiriguanos hacia el Norte, y con los Quichuizantes y Pampas, tipo Guaycurú-Querandí al Sud.

Hoy parece que la cuenca del Salado dejó de ser territorio de los nómadas Matacos, y en el siglo pasado los vemos reemplazados por los Mocovíes y otras tribus de tipo más declaradamente Guaycurú. Lozano en su t. I y p. 175 (Ed. Lamas) dice que *gasta* es pueblo en la lengua Tonocoté. Siendo esto así estas tribus debieran haber entrado á los valles de Yocavil y Londres tambien, porque toda la región Andina, está llena de lugares cuyos nombres acaban en *gasta*. (2) A estar á lo que yo sé *gasta* es tan Cacan como *ao*.

En cualquier caso una cosa podrá concederse que las tribus Matacas se habían corrido hacia el sudoeste hasta dar con el cordon del Anconquija.

(1) De Matará al Norte.

(2) En ninguno de los dialectos Mataco-Mataguayos se encuentra la voz *gasta*.

Los Matacos, como los Tobas y otras naciones Guaycurues, son y eran nómades, desde luego no se puede precisar la Zona que frecuentaban en sus correrías: en un tiempo sería hacia un punto, más tarde hacia otro, siguiendo el impulso de tribus más belicosas ó de los Españoles.

Todos están contestes que despues de la conquista numerosas tribus Matacas ó Tonocotés se retiraron hacia la cuenca del Pilcomayo y esto es precisamente lo que pudo esperarse, porque allí estaban menos expuestos á las malocas de los Españoles, que buscaban encomiendas é indios sueltos para su servicio; á estos solían llamar « piezas ».

XXI.

Etnología de la Nación ó Raza Mataco-Tonocoté.

Si es díficil precisar el punto ó suelo patrio de los Matacos no lo es menos el poder determinar su procedencia étnica. Fáltanos el primer requisito que es la craneología de estos Indios: sin ella poco, adelantaremos con aumentar párrafos, pero mediante la lengua algo se puede vislumbrar.

Fundádome pués en lo que más tarde se dirá al tratar del idioma, hallo que en el Chaco, como en el resto de América, las lenguas se agrupan gramáticalmente en dos grandes familias. La primera subfija sus particulas pronominales, la segunda las prefija. Aquella está representada por las naciones guaranizantes, y por eso la llamo *Atlántica*, esta por las quichuizantes, en razón de lo cual le doy el nombre de Andina ó del Pacífico.

Ateniéndonos á esta clasificación, los Matacos como prefijadores netos que son de las partículas pronominales, no pueden ser ni Lules, ni Vilelas, ni Quichuas, Aucasni, Aymaraes, puesto que todas estas lenguas subfijan esas particulas.

A pesar de todo existen entre el Mataco y el Lule ciertas analogías léxicas que hacen sospechar alguna mezcla, lo que por cierto explicaria esa mayor mansedumbre que es caracteristica de ambas naciones en medio de las feroces tribus Guaycurues del resto del Chaco.

estas analogías entre Lules y Matacos son puramente de voces sueltas, pero los pronombres y sus partículas se separan, *toto orbe*. No sucede otro tanto entre el Mataco y el Quichua ó Aymará: los pronombres primitivos de 1ª y 2ª persona son algo más que parecidos, razón por la que no es posible desconocer algún contacto de origen entre las dos razas, si bién en el Mataco prima el salvajismo.

Decir que una raza Americana es mestiza de origen es lo más acertado, porque tal vez no hallemos una que no lo sea; en el caso presente pues juzgando por el lado de la lingüística, yo me inclino á creer que el Mataco tenga algo de Lule y algo de Quichua.

Esto no basta. En las relaciones con que se encabeza este estudio hemos visto que las razas Mataca y Guaycurú—Toba siempre van juntas y se nos asegure que más se diferenciaban en su lengua que en sus usos y costumbres, es decir, que tenían mucho de Toba, de Mocoví y de Abipon. Esto lingüísticamente hablando es un hecho, porque esas diferencias á que se refieren los Misioneros son más bien lexicas que gramaticales. Los pronombres, sus partículas, los subfijos de pluralidad, todo acusa comunidad de origen, ó sea, un meromestizaje.

Sabido es qne los Matacos y los Tobas siempre andan cerca unos de otros, como si reconociesen el parentesco.

Estas consideraciones me inducen á creer que los matacos sean producto de padres Guaycurús en madres Lules; y los Tobas, mestizos de Guaycurúes y Matacos.

Los Cuaycurúes tienen parentesco lingüistico con los Guaraniés y estos con los Caribes y Mojo—Maypures y desde luego también pueden tenerlo con los Matacos.

Que el Mataco tenga de Guaraní, de Chaquense (raza Guaycurú, Toba, Mocoví etc.) se comprende porque todos ellos prefijan sus partículas pronominales; pero lo raro es que entre también el Quichua, que es más postergador de todos.

Todas estas anomalías lingüísticas se explican, si admitimos el decir de Montecinos, que más ó menos desde 500 años antes de nuestra era hasta los 500 después hubo grandes invasiones al Perú de la tierra firme, Brasil y Tucumán.

La observación nos enseña que los pronombres de 1ª y 2ª persona en singular y de primera (con exclusión del que oye)

en plural, corresponden á la raza predominante, ya sea por conquista, ya por algún otro título. Precisamente en estas personas es que la analogía entre Quichua y Mataco es la más exacta, debiéndose advertir que el Mataco, como el Mojo, es lógico hasta en sus partículas de posesivación lo que no sucede con el Quichua. (1)

El Aymará y Araucano acusan la misma influencia pronominal y tales analogías nos obligan á buscar la prueba craneológica, y el estudio del Mataco á la par del Quichua Aymará y Araucano.

Supongamos que el Chaco, ó mejor dicho los terrenos altos que lo rodean, hubiesen sido ocupados por razas que correspondían á lo que nosotros llamamos Lules y Quichuas, gente mansa, dócil inclinada á la civilización, vamos *Diaguitas* ó de Pueblo. Con el tiempo estas serían atacadas por otras nomadas, *Juries*, de tipo y raza más ó menos Guaycurú:—estas tribus entrarían matando y talando, haciéndose dueños del territorio, mujeres y párvulos de los vencidos.

De la cruza con los Lules, á juzgar por el idioma, pudo producirse el Vilela y otras naciones por el estilo; y del contacto con la raza andina, el Mataco y sus congéneres.

Nuevas hordas entrarían más tarde de un tipo Guaycurú más pronunciado y mediante el exterminio por un lado y el mestizaje por otro, se produciría el Mocoví, Abipon, y el Toba mestizo según yo creo, del Mataco y Mocoví ó sea Guaicurú.

Falta que estudiar el Lengua, Payaguá y demás tribus de tipo Guaycurú; pero las observaciones de arriba parece que explican hasta cierto punto el génesis de los Indios del Chaco.

Un eslabon interesante nos falta, y es, el Charrúa. El más feroz é indómito indígena de cuantos se han conocido en la Argentina, que no cedió ni á los esfuerzos de los Padres de la Compañía de Jesús. Pueblo arrinconador de razas, arrinconado más tarde él mismo en la Banda Oriental, desapareció del teatro de sus hazañas sin dejar más que escasos rastros de su existencia. Más tiempo fué cuando barría las cuencas del Paraná, Uruguay y Rio de la Plata. Cuando llegaron los Españoles y por dos siglos y más despues eran el azote de Santa Fé, Entre-Rios y Montevideo. Porque su

(1) Porque *Nokha* es—yo; *y* subfijada—mi ó mio, en Quichua.

lengua era gutural y muy difícil, yo los reclamo como del tipo original Guaycurú, esa agrupación Chaquense del tronco Caribico, en su forma más salvaje.

Es lógico atribuir á las tribus más indòmitas el abolengo de los feroces Mocovíes, Tobas, etc., y de suponer que cuanto, más pura la raza, menos dispuesta se hallaría á recibir las civilizaciones Quichuizante y europea.

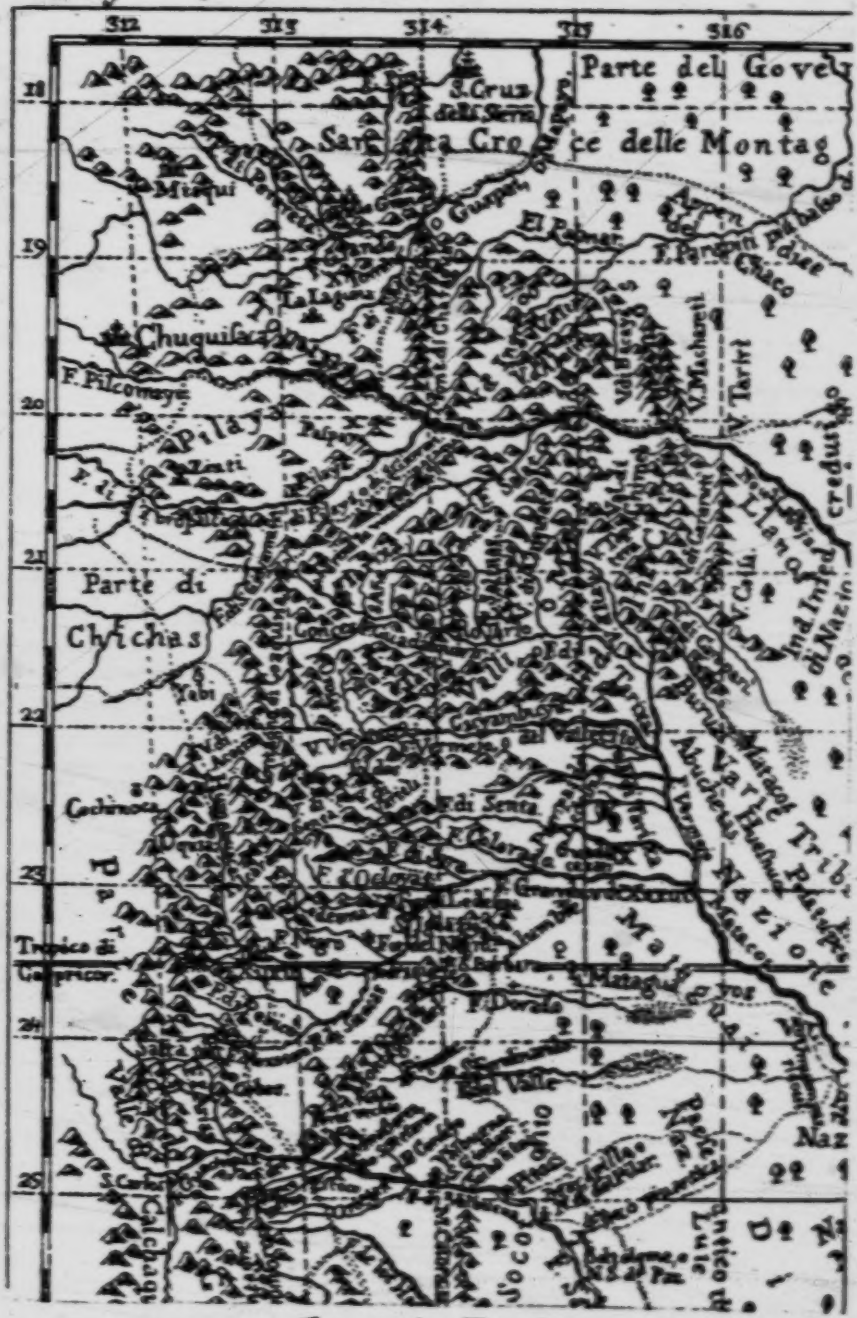
Hoy corresponde á la Antropología el resolver este problema. En el lugar donde se extinguieron los Lules en el siglo pasado deben existir restos considerables de sus esqueletos. En la Banda Oriental debe suceder otro tanto en los enterratorios de los Charruas. A los Matacos, Tobas, Mocovies, etc., aun los tenemos á la mano. Esperemos pues, que hombres competentes en la materia se dediquen al estudio de estos cráneos, y que así se confirme la hipótesis mía fundada en lo que las lenguas respectivas nos hacen entrever.

La etnología de una raza para ser acertada debe contar con la antropología de la misma. La lengua sola es insuficiente por la tendencia conocida de adoptar lo extranjero por mayor y menor.

Siento no poseer algo de los conocimientos de Quatrefages; más si un hombre tan eminente ha tenido á bien confesar su ignorancia en materia de lingüística, con más razón yo podré dejar el punto abierto hasta tanto se resuelvan los problemas de antropo logía que el suelo Argentino ofrece á los sábios del ramo. Yo me contento con mostrar las pistas que creo haber hallado, y con declarar que según las lenguas que existen, todo es mezcla en el Chaco.

Más allá con esta hipótesis no me atrevo ir. Que me sirva de disculpa este precioso párrafo de Quatrefages en su «Hommes Fossiles et Hommes Sauvages»: «Por otra parte en cuestiones de esta índole los caractéres físicos á todas luces priman en su alcance sobre los demás. Una nación cambia de lengua, de costumbres, de industrias, á veces, al cabo de un periodo relativamente corto; más la talla, la tez, la forma del craneo eso no lo puede perder con la misma rapidez.» (p. 577.)

SA Lafone Quevedo: Idioma Mataco.



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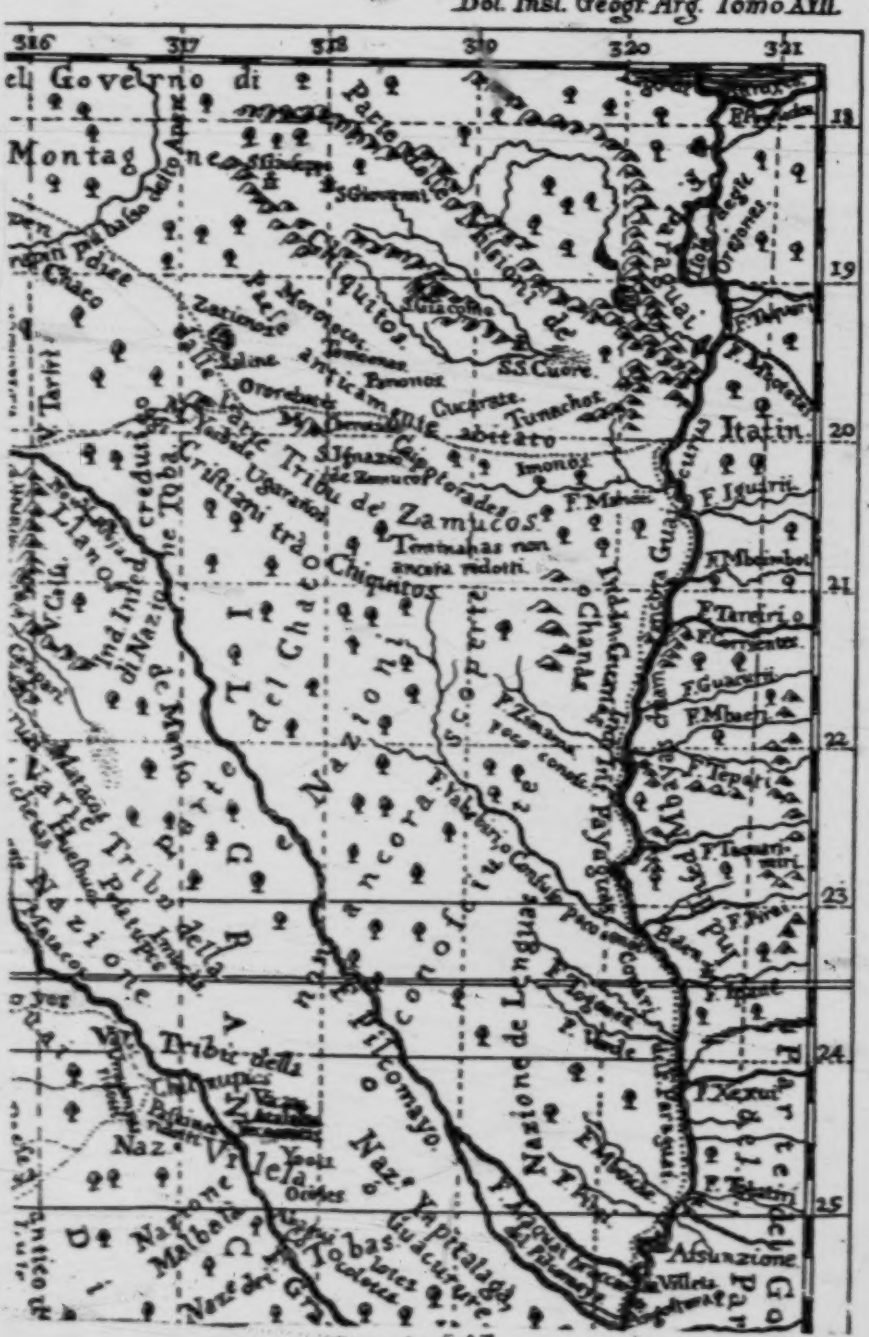
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el Governo di
Montag
Chaco
Tribu de Zamucos
Chiquitos
Itatin
Assunzione
Nazione de Lules
Nazione Vilela
Nazione Malbala
Nazione Guaycurus
Nazione Payagua
Nazione Mbaya
Nazione Guana
Nazione Chana
Nazione Mataco
Nazione Pilcomayo
Nazione Yapitalagh
Nazione Tobas
Nazione Abipones
Nazione Mocobis
Nazione Frentones
Nazione Tarijas
Nazione Chiriguanos
Nazione Tapiete
Nazione Chiquitos
Nazione Zamucos
Nazione Ugarates
Nazione Tobas
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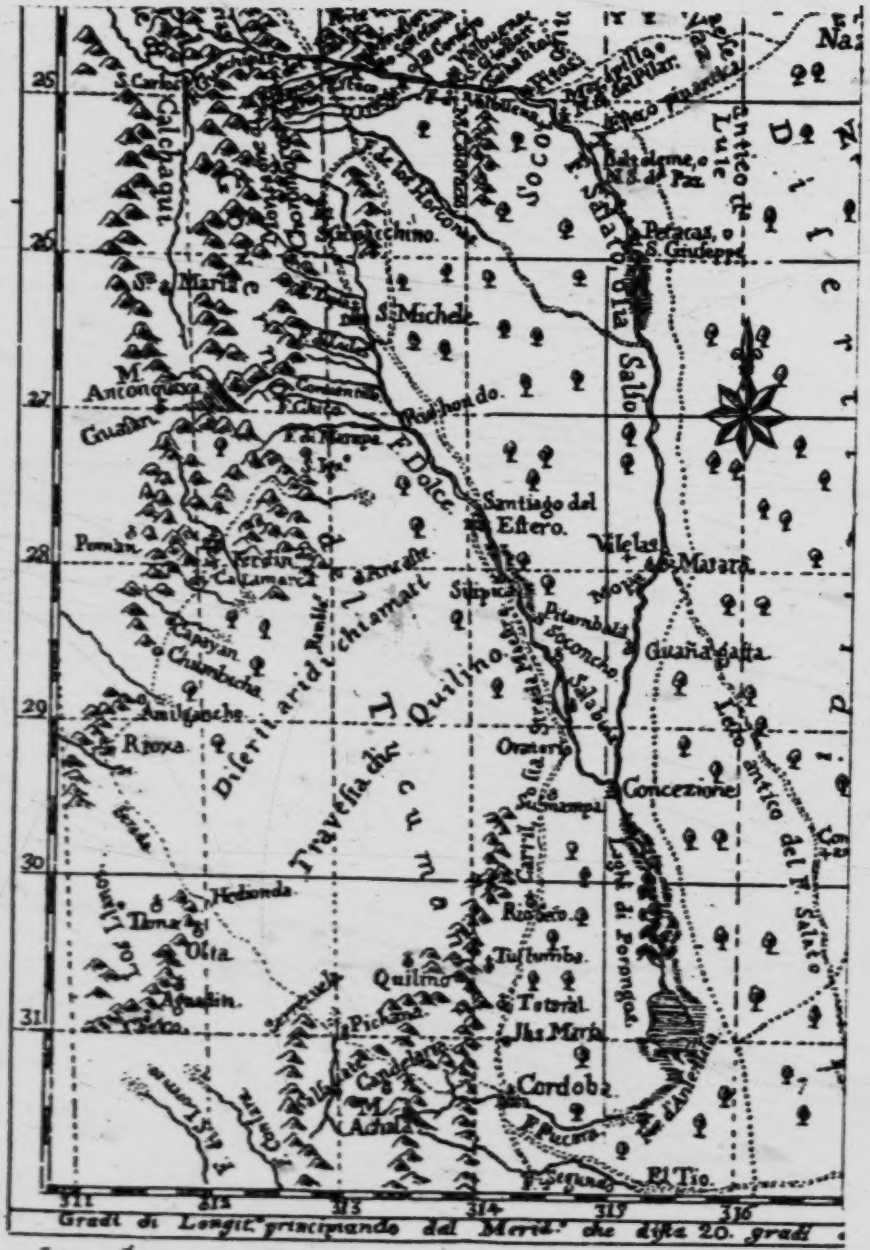

Jolis: Saggio sulla storia nat. del Gran Chaco. 1789.

[p. 614 c]

XXII.

La lengua de los Matacos.

Uno de los misterios de la lingüistica moderna es la falta de datos sobre este interesante grupo de lenguas, habladas por tribus que aun ocupan una considerable región de los Chacos Argentino-Bolivianos.

Bien poco se sabía del Mocoví, del Abipon, del Lule, pero ese poco alcanzaba para dar á conocer algo del mecanismo gramatical de las respectivas lenguas. Del Mataco empero ni Hervas ni Adelung nos dan más que noticias de que existía.

No se comprende á que se deba la completa desaparición de los textos Matacos del tiempo de los Misioneros Jesuitas, cosa de que se lamenta Machoni, más de medio siglo antes de la supresión de la orden.

Yo no puedo creer que no exista documentación al respecto en alguna parte, tampoco desespero de poder dar con ella; pero por lo pronto tendré que limitarme á los trabajos del Padre Romedí (de la orden seráfica), á los apuntes con que fuí obsequiado por el Colegio Franciscano en Tarija y en primer y honroso lugar al trabajo y á los apuntes del Ingeniero Juan Pelleschi. (1)

De los capitulos en que se trata de la historia de los Tonocotés parece que queda probado que los Tonocotés, los Mataguayos, los Matacos y las tribus Guaycurúes, tipo Mocovi, eran parcialidades de una sola raza que hablaban diferentes dialectos; pero que mucho tenían en común.

Hoy sabemos que los Noctenes, los Mataguayos, y los Matacos son tribus de una sola familia que hablan dialectos tan parecidos como lo son el portuguez, y el castellano. Ellos por su construcción gramatical de ninguna manera pueden confundirse con el Lule de Machoni; puesto que aquellos prefijan partículas pronominales y este subfija.

Hervas y Jolis (2) han desbaratado el dicho de Machoni, que

(1) Cuando escribí esto no había llegado á mismanos el M. S. del Vejóz.

(2) En italiano como en latín la J. suena Y.

CARTA
DEL GRAN CHACO
e Paesi Confinanti.
Spiegazione delle Note
Colonia Spagnuola con titolo di Città
Terra grossa, o Colonia con titolo di Villa
Altre Colonie minori, o senza titolo.
Paesetto = ò Altri luoghi = ★ Forticello.
Paesetti d'Indiani con titolo di Missioni.
Città distrutta = + Missione distrutta.
F. Fiume = M. Monte = V. Valle.
Delin. dal Sig. Ab. Gioachino Camagno Dr. Filos. della Neo. Cord.ne Università
Leghe com. di Spagna di 26 1/3 al Grado
Giuseppe Ballanti incise in Faenza
Naz. Vilela
Nazione Malbalà
Naz. dei Tobas
Naz. Yapitalagà
Guacurure
Mocobi
Nazione Grande
Contezione del Vermejo
Naz. Abipona
Naz. Vermejo
Assunzione
Villeta
Angostura
F. Tobatiri
F. Tibiquari
S. Giacomo
S. Cosmas
F. Parana
Corrientes o S. Giov. di Vera
Garzas
F. Corrientes
Lag. Iberà
Parte del Governo di Buenos Aires
Parte del Governo Paraguay
Parte delle Missioni de' Guaranies
Batada
Conoz. ant.
Letto antico del F. Salato
Diserti aridi
Gran Chaco
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20. gradi all' occid.e dell' Osservat. di Parigi
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1789.

[p. 614 d]

los Tonocotés que hablaban Lule se habían refugiado en la cuenca del Pilcomayo. Ni en aquel entonces, ni en estos dias, se ha decubierto tribu alguna que corresponda á los Lules de Machoni en aquella región, y sí muchas del tipo Nocten, Mataco, Mataguayo que yo supongo sean los verdaderos Tonocotés ó Toconotés.

Del más somero exámen de la lengua mataca ó Mataguaya, ó Nocten, resalta que es un idioma que hace uso de sus partículas pronominales como prefijos, mientras que el Lule con la misma tenacidad los posterga.

Esta circunstancia ya en sí separa el Mataco del Lule con una valla que no se salva con el parrafillo indirecto del Padre Machoni. No por esto niego que el Mataco y el Lule puedan poseer palabras en común, cómo que se harán notar más tarde algunas de estas analogías; pero el mecanismo gramatical y los pronombres mismos estan apuntando en direcciones muy opuestas.

Siguiendo pues la clasificación que se viene estableciendo en estos estudios, el Mataco corresponde al tipo Atlántico, en cuanto á la colocación de esta clase de afijos aunque es impresión mía que se inclina más bién á la rama Moja, que á la Guaraní, no obstante la mayor inmediación á la última.

Antes de proceder mas adelante examinemos los argumentos en que se funda Machoni para sacar de su Lule el Tonocoté de Techo y otros.

1° La lengua Lule no es general sino particular de cinco naciones, Lúle, Isistiné, Toquistiné, *Oristiné*, (1) y Tonocoté. Los Tonocotés contaban 60 mil almas. Prólogo de Machoni.

2° Los Tonocotés en el siglo 17 vivian cerca de la Concepción del Bermejo y fueron evangelizados por los P. P. Bárcena y Añasco. Disgustados estos Indios con los Españoles se retiraron á las riberas del Rio Yabebirí y Pilcomayo. Ibid.

3° Los Lules, Isistinés Toquistinés y Oristinés fueron evangelizados por los P. P. Bárcena, Monroy y Viana en 1589 y visitados por San Francisco Solano. Ibid.

4° Los Isistinés, Toquistinès y Oristinès huyeron al Chaco y alli permanecieron por más de cien años hasta que en 1710 se le presentaron á don Esteban de Urizar y Arespacochaga quién los colocó en las reducciones de Valbuena y Miraflores, y con ellos estuvo el P. Machoni 9 años.

(1) Los Misioneros consultados por Hervas niegan que haya Oristinès.

5º Bárcena compuso Arte y Vocabulario del idioma de estos Indios, cuando evangelizó á los Tonocotés y Lules. De este Arte confiesa Machoni que no ha quedado más que la noticia que se da en la vida del Misionero. Ibid.

Conclusión. *Ergo* esta lengua Lule es la Tonocoté, particular de las cinco naciones ya dichas; y la usan los de la nación Matará y otras muchas del Chaco sin otro motivo que ser vecinos á los Tonocotés y Lules y comerciar con estos en su barbarismo.

De todo este *non sequitur* han dado cuenta los Padres Yolis y Hervas. Machoni confiesa que del Tonocoté no quedaba más que las noticias sueltas á que se refiere, que por cierto carecían de toda importancia filológica.

Los Lules de Machoni serán ó no serán los del P. Techo, pero por lo que respecta á los Tonocotés Machoni no presentó ni la más remota prueba de que fuesen Lules; desde luego no se puede extender á los Tonocotés, ese idioma que él llamó Lules y atribuyó á estos indios.

Hasta para los fines del misionero fué desgraciada la identificación, porque en la región esa del Pilcomayo residen los Noctenes, Matacos, Mataguayos y Tobas para los que la lengua Lule no sería la más adecuâda como lengua general.

Si Hervas hubiese conocido el caracter prefijador de las lenguas Mataguaya, Nocten etc., aun más acerbo hubiese sido su critica contra los Lules—Tonocotés del P. Machioni.

Él como buen filólogo comprendería que en cien años una lengua subfijadora mal podía pasar á ser prefijadora. Este cambio violento no se advierte en ninguna de las otras lenguas del Chaco. El Toba de hoy es como el toba de Bárcena, y así de los demás idiomas.

Hay que conceder, pués, que el Lule de Machoni no fué ni pudo ser el Tonocoté de las primeras Misiones.

Ahora como sabemos que los Mataguayos hablaban Tonocoté en el tiempo de que se trata, y que hoy Noctenes, Mataguayos, Matacos y muchas otras tribus hablan dialectos del Mataco, mientras no se pruebe lo contrario, debemos suponer que el Mataco sea el Tonocoté. Una lengua fuerte como ésta no podía perderse en el Chaco.

La Mataca es de las lenguas fuertes hablada por el gentio

más numeroso de los Chacos Argentino-Bolivianos de la que ninguna cuenta hallamos en los autores; se impone pues la deducción que la lengua de los Matacos es la Tonocoté, única hipótesis racional que por ahora cabe.

En cuanto á lenguas podemos decir que lo que los Mojos son á los Chiquitos eso son los Matacos á los Chaquenses tipo Toba-Mocoví; y así como aquellos tienen sus tribus Mosetenas así también estos contaban y cuentan con sus Lules y Vílelas.

XXIII.

De los nombres Tonocoté, Mataco y Mataguayo.

Nada mejor que lo que acerca de este punto ha escrito Hervás en su Catálogo de las Lenguas T. I. P. 168 y 172—Afirma que los Tonocotés son los indios llamados *Matarás* y sigue así:—«*Mata-*«*rás* es palabra peruana, que significa una yerba que en español «se suele llamar *espadaña*, etc.» Las palabras *Toconot* y *Toconoté* (así por *Tonocoté*) no tienen significación alguna en el idioma *Lule*, según el parecer de los misioneros de la nación Lule, los cuales me han dicho no haber oido jamás de ésta ni de los *Matarás* (que son los verdaderos *Toconotés*), (1) que estas naciones sean parientas suyas: y los indios llaman parientes á todas las naciones que hablan el idioma de ellos: un misionero de los *Matarás* me ha dicho que oyó hablar algunas veces á sus indios una lengua que le era desconocida; y que habiéndose informado de la calidad de ella, supo que era idioma antiguo de los *Matarás*: más porque el dicho misionero sabe solamente la lengua *Quichua*, con la que hablaba á los *Matarás*, no se puede decidir si las lenguas *Matarás* y *Toconoté* son diversas totalmente, ó dialectos de una misma lengua.»

Este parrafillo es una prueba más de lo que vengo sosteniendo hace tiempo, que los padres de la Compañía dejaron mas *Quichua* que la que encontraron en las regiones que evangelizaron. Los indios aprenden las vecinas lenguas con la mayor facilidad: tienen buena memoria, oído finísimo y se fijan mucho en lo que puede serles de provecho.

(1) Hervás escribe siempre *Toconoté* por *Tonocoté*.

Los nombres *Mataco* y *Mataguayo*, que en el P. Techo son determinadas parcialidades, y hoy han quedado como genéricos de este grupo de tribús y sus lenguas, no son los que los indios usaban para nombrarse á sí mismos. Ellos eran *Uicquü*.

Entrar á etimologar el nombre Mataco sin saber quienes fueron los que primero aplicaron tal apodo á estos indios, sería tarea estéril. Lo probable es que se trate de una voz ó raíz Quichúa, y lo único que se podrá decir es esto: que en los temas *Churu-matas*, *Matará*, *Mataco* y *Mataguayo* encontramos una raíz comùn *Mata*, que sin duda se refería á algo que se llamaba así, y que tenía que ver con las personas ó costumbres de estos indios, ó con la región que habitaban.

Es cosa curiosa que casi todos los nombres, bajo los cuales conocemos á los Indígenas de las Américas sean postizos, como por ejemplo el de Guaraníes: y los Matacos no son ninguna excepción de esta regla. Los Tobas oyen de *Ntocuitt*, y los *Matacos* de *Uicquü*. Mas tarde, cuando se pueda probar que la *cq*. Mataca es mudanza de *tt*., tal vez se vea que *Uicq* y *Uuitt* no son más que dos variantes de la misma voz que diga *Hombre*.

Conclusión.

Ya se ha dado cuenta de lo que eran los indios Matacos desde que entraron los españoles á la conquista del Tucumán en el siglo XVI. Como se habrá notado las noticias con que contábamos, las debíamos á las relaciones de los Padres Misioneros, que no se proponían otra cosa que ganar almas para el cielo, y todo su empeño en aprender lenguas se limitaba á poder reproducir en ellas, de una manera mas ó menos comprensible para sus catecúmenos, los misterios de la religión cristiána y las enseñanzas conducentes á ello. Sus esfuerzos fueron coronados muchas veces con un éxito admirable y donde el pernicioso ejemplo de los malos cristianos viejos no se metía de por medio para esterilizar los resultados de las conversiones, los cristianos nuevos hacían honor á sus maestros y á la religión que profesaban, como se vió en las Misiones Guaraníticas.

El salvaje es eminentemente hombre de conciencia y cumple sus deberes con la regularidad de una máquina. Es el hombre civilizado que le ha enseñado á profesar una fé y poner en práctica otra.

A pesar de todas las críticas adversas, es indudable que los Padres Misioneros hicieron comprender á sus indios los misterios de nuestra religión tan bien como la comprenden muchos de los que no son indios. Verdad es, sin embargo, que para muchos sería más satisfactorio conocer el organismo y vocabulario de una lengua nueva sin intervención de interpretaciones á veces forzadas con el objeto de introducir un nuevo caudal de ideas y conceptos.

Si esto es cierto de la lengua, con cuanta más razón de los usos, costumbres, etc., de los que la hablan. El Misionero no tiene más que un dilema, lo que no es de Dios es del Diablo, y el Dios de los indios, por mas bueno quo sea, en Diablo se convierte para ellos. Aparte de todo esto, no pensar así los exponía á graves cargos por parte de sus superiores, y á algo peor por parte de la Iglesia.

Nos hacía falta, pues siempre un trabajo por un seglar que pueda describirnos al Indio y á su lengua sin idea alguna preconcebida acerca de una y otra cosa. Queremos oir á uno que estudia al indio en medio de su salvajismo, y que esté pronto á roconocer que lo malo del buen indio puede ser mejor cosa que lo bueno del mal hombre, que se dice civilizado: hablo del *bien* y del *mal* según nuestra idea de estas dos cualidades.

La falta ésta ha sido llenada de una manera muy especial por el ingeniero Juan Pelleschi en su bien conocido «Otto Mesi nel Gran Ciacco,» pero faltaban en esa obra los abundantes y excelentes vocabularios, diálogos, y frases que permanecían inéditos en sus carteras de viaje. En estos está reproducido el modo de pensar y de decir del indio Mataco *at home*, en su selva y en su sencillez salvaje. No ha querido el Sr. Pelleschi que se corrija *la Castilla* del interlocutor cuando la frase era inventada por éste en una y otra lengua, lo que da aún más valor á estas ilustraciones de lo que es la lengua de los Uicquū. Ha hecho el señor Pelleschi lo que está haciendo el Dr. Leuz en Chile por los Araucanos, y con tanto aplauso.

En el trabajo del autor no tenemos mas parte mi secretario, y yo, que el haberlo reducido á orden alfabético y haber formulado el Léxicon Mataco—Español, sin el cual ningún estùdio de una lengua puede llamarse completo.

Como el original está en italiano he debido traducir la parte del libro que aquí se reproduce, dejando la corrección á cargo del autor. Los ingleses comprendieron la importancia de la obra antes

que nosotros, y era hasta vergüenza que la descripción mas moderna y mas completa sobre indios nuestros, hubiese sido escrita en idioma extrangero y que no se hubiese vertido á la lengua nacional. El Instituto geográfico con esta publicación ha levantado la tacha, con el aumento de los Vocabularios, etc., que faltan en la obra original y que tanto realzan el valor de este trabajo.

No es imposible que el autor mas tarde haga un estudio de lo que aquí se publica con la intención de perfeccionar su ensayo de arte de la lengua Mataca. Pero aunque así no lo hiciere bastará lo publicado para darnos casi cabal cuenta de lo que es y de lo que no es la lengua de estos indios.

Como la traducción ha sido corregida por el mismo autor, donde se encuentren lagunas ó se advierta intercalación, ello se deberá á indicación del mismo, como que á él corresponderá también todo material nuevo que se haya suplementado.

En la clave que precede á los Vocabularios se designarán la procedencia de las voces y frases y las letras con que ella se indicará. Como se comprenderá, esto realza el valor de aquellos, por que una voz extraña oída una vez ó de un solo sujeto, está expuesta á error; más cuando son varios los testimonios acerca de su valor léxico y fonético, poca duda puede quedar. Por este lado también es altamente interesante el trabajo del Ing. Pelleschi, y un paso dado en el sentido de conocer mejor la fonología enmarañada de las Lenguas del Chaco tipo Guaycurú, de las que el Mataco es un segundo tronco.

El Mapa se ha confeccionado por el ingeniero Güido Jacobacci, según los informes que le hemos dado y con la ayuda del Mapa de los Padres Jolis y Corrado, y del de Araos. Allí se verá bien establecida la Región Mataca, y la gran extensión de territorio que ocupaban y ocupa la nación á que nosotros damos este nombre. Es una contribución más á la geografía de las Lenguas Argentinas, una sección del Mapa Etnico de la Repùblica, y como tal loofrecemos á nuestros lectores.

Algunos de los nombres en el mapa llevan una fecha abajo, lo que importa un dato histórico, es decir que la «Nación» esa se hallaba allí en el siglo indicado, pero que en la actualidad no permanece ya en aquel sitio.

La primera parte, de que sólo yo soy responsable, va acompañada con una reproducción facsimilaria del precioso Mapa del

Padre Jolis, tan poco conocido entre nosotros, y que no obstante es el mejor que yo he visto de la región á que se refiere. Está lleno de datos de interés histórico y étnico; y lleva la graduación de Longitud arreglada al meridiano que siempre se toma como punto de partida en los mapas y relaciones de los siglos anteriores al nuestro.

En el Mapa del señor Jacobacci se verifica la enorme región argentina que ocupaba la Nación Mataco—Mataguaya; y más y más se extraña que ellos y su lengua hubiesen permanecido tan desconocidos. El señor Pelleschi ha hecho un verdadero servicio á la etnología y lingüística argentinas con sus dos trabajos, y no lo es menos el que presta el Instituto Geográfico con darlos á conocer y ponerlos al alcance de todos.

(Continuará).

1: Pelleschi S17 Mataco

BOLETIN

DEL

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IMPRENTA «LA BUENOS AIRES»
MORENO ESQ. PERÚ

1897

LOS INDIOS MATACOS Y SU LENGUA

POR

JUAN PELLESCHI
Ingeniero Civil

PARTE PRIMERA

CAPÍTULO I

SITUACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA

Los matacos lindan al oeste con la frontera de Salta y al este con la de los Tobas, así que estrechados á un tiempo entre dos enemigos se han aliado después con estos últimos, los que se hallan más hácia el este; y con los Cristianos, aquellos del oeste: unos á otros se hacen la guerra. Esto no obstante, aún conservan la lengua común de la que son muy celosos, sin que por eso dejen de hablarla unos y otros con algunas diferencias dialécticas. Así, por ejemplo, los Matacos del Este emplean casi siempre el *quiá* y el *tzá*, donde los del Oeste emplearían el *chá*, sin perjuicio de que en la misma tribu usen sin dificultad cualquiera de las dicciones estas. Lo propio sucede con *quió*, *tzó*, *chó;* por ejemplo: «gama» es *tzonaj*, *quiondj* ó *chonaj* indistintamente.

Cada nación de indios tiene su propio territorio y se bate por un palmo de tierra como nosotros: también entre las tribus de una sola nación están asignadas las respectivas zonas que no se pueden ultrapasar sin dar lugar á guerras. Estas guerras son muy frecuentes por los muchos motivos apuntados en otra parte, y por el espíritu del pillaje que domina á los indios; así cada vez que saben que una tribu

[p. 173]

se ha enriquecido, por este ó aquel motivo, en animales y en prendas, tratan de despojarla por medio de una sorpresa. Se siguen muertes, heridas y prisiones que son causa de nuevas guerras hechas sin previa declaración: por lo mismo tienen recíprocamente muchos bomberos y espías.

La fortuna desde mucho tiempo favorece á los Tobas que ocupan los mejores terrenos, es decir aquellos á orillas del Paraná y del Paraguay, por unas 60 leguas tierra adentro, y por cientos á lo largo de dichos ríos; además con el comercio clandestino con Corrientes y la República del Paraguay estos indios se han provisto de algunas armas de fuego; por otra parte con motivo de ser los que están á mayor distancia del cerco, que cada vez más los estrecha por el lado de los Cristianos, reciben de éstos el contingente importante de los bandidos que huyen de ellos.

Es así que los Vilelas y los Chulupíes se han mezclado con los Tobas, lo mismo que van haciendo los Mocovíes, que vivían al sudoeste, en contacto con las fronteras de Santa Fé y de Santiago, y que además tienen tanto en común con ellos en la lengua, como que he hallado muchas palabras idénticas. Esto mismo es lo que les está pasando á los Matacos.

CAPÍTULO II

RASGOS FÍSICOS DEL MATACO

Entre los Tobas y los Matacos son notables las diferencias en las proporciones. En general el Mataco es casi un medio palmo más bajo que el Toba, sin que por eso sea un hombre pequeño con respecto á nosotros. Su pecho es amplísimo, su cuello es de toro y bien desarrollados los músculos; es morrudo, su cabeza gruesa, su cara ancha, con el arco de los pómulos muy pronunciado, como también el de los carrillos.

Tienen la mandíbula inferior larga y muy inclinada hácia abajo, y la frente rara vez espaciosa pero las más de las veces parece achicada por el pelo desaliñado. Los piés son regulares, las manos pequeñas, bien formadas y admirablemente unidas al brazo, especialmente en las mujeres; la barba muy poca, muy rala, y depilada. De los 32 dientes, los colmillos me han parecido en general poco pronunciados, y ello se explicaría por la costumbre de comer pescado y fruta, y muy poco ó nada de carne: sin embargo no faltan excepciones. Los dientes son lindos é intactos en los jóvenes, y en los viejos, ó faltan, ó son gas-

tados y amenudo feos; pero el esmalte de estos dientes no me parece que sea como el de los nuestros; el blanco es el del hueso y no del marfil, y casi estoy por creer que sea de menos resistencia. Las encías tienen un rosado mate, y lo mismo los labios. ¿Dependerá del alimento? Ellos no comen sal porque no la tienen, y eso que les gusta, y la saborean como si fuese azucar, cuando se les da. Por lo demás los labios son hinchados, algo sobresalientes y vueltos hácia afuera Los ojos los tienen casi todos ligeramente oblicuados, con la punta inferior inclinada hácia la naríz y en forma de almendra, más los hay también bien redondos y horizontales: éstos son negros retintos, con el blanco que parece como si se le hubiese puesto un poco de azul, mientras que en los oblícuos me ha parecido que se halla muchas veces en el blanco un viso de verde como de hiel, sobre todo en los individuos ancianos.

La naríz es larga, derecha y chata, con las ventanas también chatas y de notable expansión; pero no es roma. Esto de la naríz roma es una de sus más serias preocupaciones, á tal grado, que no comen carne de oveja, porque aseguran que se las haría crecer romas como las de éstas.

Viveza de sus médicos y hechiceros, los que, para impedir la destrucción de las pocas ovejas que tienen, y con ellas de la poca lana que tejen y les es tan útil, han inventado este piadoso engaño, tan parecido á otros que conocemos. ¡Así, somos de parecidos los hombres en todo el mundo y en todas las épocas en cuanto á los artificios y la presunción!

El cabello es lacio-crinoso, pero en algunos, si bien pocos individuos, lo he notado algo ondulado, casi crespo, ignoro si por arte ó por naturaleza; y he advertido, en algunos, calvicie incipiente. El pelo es negro retinto en los adultos, blanco en los viejos, pero raras veces, por falta, supongo, de hombres de mucha edad; rojizo amenudo en los muchachos hasta los 10 ó los 12 años: cosa curiosa y que trae á la memoria la teoría de Salles, según el cual el hombre primitivo debió haber tenido cabello rojo. Aquí tendríamos un caso de atavismo. Usan el cabello largo y alborotado, mas se lo cortan durante un año cuando están de luto. No por eso dejan de peinarse, muy particularmente las mujeres. Me acuerdo de una vez que deseaba mucho conseguir una pala, hecha de palo-fierro, en forma de remo doble, con las palas de punta aguda y angosta, era de un indio, amigo mío que tenía una mujer bastante hermosa; le ofrecí un peine por aquella pala doble, pero después de haber pensado bien la cosa, no quiso el indio saber nada; con gran sentimiento, según me pareció, de la mujer, quien esto no obstante, se valió del cariño y afecto que le inspiraba al marido para decidirlo á que al siguiente día viniese espontá-

neamente á proponerme el cambio; al lector acaso le parecería mejor un poco más de generosidad por parte mía; pero que se acuerde que si yo hubiese regalado el peine no me hubiese sido ya posible hacerme de la pala, cosa que me interesaba más que la adamítica pareja india.

Lo que he dicho de los Matacos, dígase también de los Tobas, con esto más, que los Tobas lo superan en el alto y tienen la frente en general más descubierta, no sé si más amplia, debido á que se ciñen la cabellera con una bincha; dígase también de los Mocovíes y de los Chulupíes, que todos juntos son los indios que habitan el Gran Chaco Argentino, al norte del cual están, más allá en el Chaco Boliviano, los Chiriguanos y los Cirionoses.

De todos estos indios el color varía entre el de cobre nuevo y el de barro, á veces con algunas manchas ó salpicaduras como de negro.

CAPÍTULO III

ALGUNOS RASGOS ETNICOS

Suele asegurarse que estos indios son muy sucios, mas yo tengo muy serias dudas al respecto; porque durante el verano yo los he visto tirarse por gusto al agua á ciertas horas fijas del día en gran número, así de hombres como de mujeres, cada sexo en su lugar. Esto revelaría más bien una costumbre y no un capricho: aparte de esto á menudo están en el agua para pescar. Cierto es que parecen sucios, ante todo por la tez, y después por los arañones que forman costras, y por la quemadura del sol, que arruga la piel tostada, especialmente sobre los hombros; y por fin como que andan descalzos y desnudos en el fango, entre malezas y arbustos y como se acuestan en el suelo, es natural que se llenen de tierra, tal como se empolva cada uno de nosotros que se lava mil veces al día, y mil veces vuelve á donde da con que ensuciarse; mugrientos empero, perdóneseme la expresión, no lo son, y yo afirmo que no son sucios por costumbre.

Una toldería se forma de más ó menos número de toldos, formados de ramas plantadas en la tierra y atadas arriba en forma de bóveda. Sobre este armazón arrojan abundante paja, hasta hacerlo parecer, no un toldo, sino un carro colmado de heno que tapa hasta las ruedas.

La paja la arrojan desde alguna distancia y con tanto acierto, que causa admiración, tanto más puesto que son las *chinas* las que hacen esta labor. Un toldo adquiere, una vez rematado, tal firmeza, que un hombre puede pararse y balancearse encima; y no deja que pase el agua.

Cada cacique tiene su grupo de toldos aparte, como otros tantos cuarteles, y á veces suelen ser muchos los caciques, especialmente cuando se reunen con motivo de llevar la guerra á otra parte.

Los toldos en general son tan bajos que no se puede estar de pié adentro, pero varían en el largo según sea la familia y según el número de familias que en él se reunen. Los toldos largos son un poco corvos, con dos ó más puertas; los vanos de entrada, casi siempre están provistos de un lado, aquel del viento, de una aleta fija para atajarlo; hay que agacharse para poder entrar.

Se distinguen en un toldo diversas partes, á saber: las cocinas y los departamentos donde á la vez duermen, se sientan, trabajan, etc., pero no están separados entre sí materialmente.

La cocina no es más que un espacio barrido en que encienden el fuego, y sólo la usan cuando hace frío, ó en caso del luto de la madre de familia, que por un año no asoma afuera, ni se deja ver, ni habla, sino en las ocasiones más necesarias; por lo general cocinan la comida afuera y delante de la puerta. Las cocinas son tantas cuantas sean las familias.

El dormitorio es el espacio en que ponen las pieles y sus hatos, si los tienen, para acostarse en ellos, ó ponérselos á cuestas cuando salen, si hace frio; á la cabecera y á los piés cuelgan á las paredes sus cosas, como ser las bolsas, las redes etc., y parte de sus armas. Algunas veces plantan cuatro horconcillos de un palmo de alto sobre la tierra á las cuatro esquinas de la cama, les ponen al través dos varejones, y sobre éstos colocan á lo largo las latas necesarias para hacer una especie de encatrado sobre que extienden las pieles ó colchas. Esta cama la usan especialmente en el verano para conservarla más fresca, y para librarse de los insectos y reptiles ponzoñosos. Entre los cristianos se acostumbra la misma cosa con horcones en vez de horconcillos, y hasta de un metro y medio ó dos de alto, para librarse de los tigres. Yo hé dormido sobre todas estas camas, y aseguro que todo es cuestión de costumbre; no obstante se duerme mucho mejor sobre el suelo. Cuando levantan campamento, los indios queman sus chozas.

En mataco la choza ó casa se dice de dos maneras: *háuét* y *hépp* (la *h* suena como en el alemán *haus* ó la *c* de Florencia): ahora *hépp* también quiere decir humo, vapor, neblina y una paja que de lejos parece en realidad neblina; *hepp* llaman al vapor (barco). Ahora, pidiendo perdón, ¿no es perfecta la analogía de criterio, entre este idiotismo mataco y el nuestro, el llamar *hogar* á la familia ó casa, y *vapor* al barco á vapor? He aquí otra aproximación mental entre el hombre mataco y el hombre aryano.

Delante de la puerta de la casa plantan la lanza parada, y á un costado arriman el arco y las flechas; lo que da cierto aspecto bélico que

agrada. Las casas no están delineadas simétricamente, no por eso dejan de hacer lo posible por dejar entre fila y fila de ranchos un espacio ancho como para calle.

Dá gusto ver los fuegos de ellos cuando cocinan. Allí arriba están ollas de barro que contienen varias raíces y frutas silvestres, que en general han menester de varias aguas. Entre éstas es buena y agradable una especie de poroto, y una raíz que está entre la batata y la papa. Las ollas las hacen y queman las chinas trabajándolas con cuidado.

Cuando es llegada la hora de comer, que suele ser en la tolderia á las 11 a. m., y á la oración, salen á luz sartas de pescados en asador, que chisporrotean y humean y chorrean como para hacerse agua la boca. Algunas veces colma la mesa alguna presa de carne de caza cualquiera, ó algún conejito de cerco, todos bocados de lo mejor, si bien la falta de sal compromete el éxito culinario para quien está acostumbrado á ella desde la fuente bautismal.

A los indios les gusta que el cristiano sea dado con ellos y no desprecie sus cosas. Así es que yo en las tolderías, después de haber cobrado confianza, andaba acá y allá probando sus manjares, y ellos á todo reirse mientras yo repetía, *hiss, hiss*, que quiere decir *bueno, bueno*. Que sí, hay que comer con el tenedor que la naturaleza nos dió, excepción hecha del caldo que se toma con la concha de una almeja muy abundante en esas lagunas. Donde corrí riesgo de comprometerme fué una vez al tener que beber en un mate inmundo con boca toda mugrienta. Cerré empero los ojos, y pocos momentos después los volvía á abrir glorioso y triunfante.

Esa vez, al retirarnos, quisieron ver la descarga de los fusiles, y nosotros por complacerlos hicimos dos ó tres tiros al aire. Cosa era de oir la griteria de aquellas chinas, y ver el tropel de aquellos muchachos por recoger las cápsulas de los tiros. ¡Cómo se parece el sér hombre en todos los estados de la civilización y de edad!

Me olvidaba decir que el ancho de los toldos no suele ser nunca mayor que el largo de una cama.

CAPITULO IV

LAS CHINAS

Ocupémonos también un rato de las Chinas. Las Chinas Matacas son por lo general bastante petizas, mas ello no les priva de ser á veces asaz simpáticas, y de ser bien formadas mientras son jóvenes

Entre ellas no es difícil verlas desnudas, mas en presencia de forasteros nunca les falta una más ó menos protectora hoja de parra. A bordo tuvimos por bastantes días un marido y su mujer: ésta vestía un par de calzoncillos como los que usamos entre nosotros cuando nos bañamos, y como era joven bien formada y hermosota, aseguro que daba un beneficio algo comprometedor para algunos de nuestros argonautas, anacoretas á la fuerza.

Al ver, pues, esta pareja, sólo faltándole un punto para estar desnuda, sentada sobre un banco entre los cilindros y pistones de la máquina, sin moverse por horas, nos traía á la memoria de hecho la escena del Paraíso Terrenal.

Las chinas en medio de estraños se están mudas é impasibles, mas entre ellas son chancistas y juguetonas como criaturas. Y éste es en general el carácter de los Indios.

Una postura curiosa de las chinas es la de las manos cuando están de pie. Como no las pueden meter en algún bolsillo, ni entretenerlas con un abanico, ó qué sé yo, se las echan encima de los pechos, que en tal caso prestan el servicio de mensulas á los brazos que juntos descansan sobre ellos.

Parece que tal costumbre debería estirarlos mucho, pero no es así. Los pechos son anchos, es cierto, pero bajos y parados, mientras son ellas jóvenes; después *experta virum*, y que hayan dado de mamar á uno ó más hijos, se arrugan y se encojen los pechos de una manera, á fé, muy poco estética. Nótese que envejecen temprano allí, hombres y mujeres, y así también mueren, y se debe atribuir á esto que escasean los cabellos canos, aún cuando hay caras y cuerpos tan apergaminados que parecerían pertenecer á personas tan viejas como Matusalen.

Me he particularizado con esta circunstancia del pecho, porque se sabe que en otras regiones, según lo que se dice, las mujeres cuando dan de mamar, echan para atras el pezón á la criatura que cargan á las espaldas. Aquí, por cierto, no sucede otro tanto.

Las mujeres tienen, como los hombres, el cabello abundante, crinoso y lacio; lo usan bastante largo, pero no tanto como podrían, en parte porque lo acorta el usarlo desgreñado (lo que les sirve para protejer los ojos y la frente del sol) y en parte porque se lo cortan.

Se cortan el pelo, tanto de la barba como de la cabellera, con las mandíbulas de un pescado llamado *palometa*, armadas de dientes agudísimos que parecen dispuestos en fila doble y que se enmalletan los superiores con los inferiores.

La *palometa*, la *raya* y el *yacaré* son el espanto de los que se bañan en este río y en las lagunas ó *madrejones* que de él se forman. La *palometa* da el mordisco, arranca pedazos de carne, y puede hasta

hacer un flaco servicio, como el que se cuenta del lujurioso aquel en el *Ricciardetto*. Es un pescado ovoído y chato que anda sobre el filo. La *raya* es redonda y chata, y tiene tres puntas en la cola, de las que con la del medio hinca y hace una herida á la vez dolorosa y de peligro, cuando el peje pisado dobla la cola y da un flechazo: las hay de más de un metro de diámetro; se coloca en el fondo de los remansos y lo más cerca que pueda de la orilla: parece vivípara. El *yacaré*, especie de cocodrilo, de improviso muerde la pierna ó brazo del desgraciado que se baña, lo arrastra al fondo de las aguas y allí se lo devora.

Así el baño, tan necesario para refrescarnos en los calores sofocantes, era siempre amargado por la presencia de estos antropocidas.

La china casada le es fiel al marido por inclinación, por educación y por miedo. Se cuenta de venganzas espantosas de maridos, como que tienen derecho de vida y muerte sobre sus mujeres infieles. Mientras son solteras pueden y suelen ser liberales. No se puede dudar que los cristianos se captan las simpatías de ellas, si no se meten de por medio las preocupaciones de raza; porque el más pobre de los cristianos se halla siempre en posición de hacer mejores regalos que el más rico de los caciques.

A estas mujeres les gusta los adornos y los trajes, pero en sus costumbres no cabe pollera, ni corsé; en su lugar se envuelven el cuerpo, de la cintura abajo, con una manta, y la sostienen y aseguran con una faja ó cuerda que queda tapada por la doblez del ropaje. Aparte de esto saben disponer esos trapos tan bien, que hacen resaltar sus bellas formas sin que les estorbe el andar, cosa que no sería de esperar al verlas. Su vestido consiste en mantos, y cuando los tienen se los meten todos encima, sea invierno, sea verano, en parte por la vida nómade que llevan, en parte porque les gusta; porque es gente *sazonada*, y parece que en ellos se realiza de veras el refrán aquel:—que lo que ataja el frío, ataja el calor.

Hombres y mujeres son amigos de los colores vivos (muy en particular del rojo) y de la variedad. No por eso dejan de hacer gran caso de la tela blanca. Cuando se echan algo sobre la espalda, siempre dejan un brazo en descubierto. Son aficionadas á las camisas que usamos nosotros.

Ellas no más se fabrican los adornos de cuero y de conchas de ostras despedazadas, y con cierta pretensión á la elegancia de forma, aunque ella sea más ó menos grosera; usan una especie de pulsera de cuero desde niñas, hasta que la regalan, según se dice, al que primero cosecha sus favores. Tejen las camisas de piola ó malla doble bien tupida, pero elástica; parecen cotas, que no llevan mangas, y las adornan de varios modos con pedazos de conchas de ostras; les sir-

ven sobre todo en sus peleas y contra las espinas de los bosques; pero de estas camisas tienen pocas.

Otros adornos se hacen de plumas, en especial de avestruz, con ellas se engalanan la frente, la cintura, los hombros, las muñecas y los tobillos. Adornos por el mismo estilo se ponen los hombres cuando han de pelear ó han de asistir á las fiestas y cuando curan á los enfermos, como se dirá.

Ellas mismas se hacen también algunos tejidos de lana sacada de las pocas ovejas que poseen, arreglados los colores naturales en forma regular á rayas ó cuadros. Dibujo de adorno no conocen.

Para tejer plantan cuatro horconcillos en los cuatro ángulos, se cruzan palos sobre los que estiran los hilos de la urdimbre, y con una *pala* de un palmo de largo hacen correr y aprietan la trama: no conocen la naveta.

Al tejer llaman *potzin*: al telar, *noccaléi*, y á los hilos, *huoléi*. Estas palabras que no tienen afinidad alguna con las análogas del castellano, nos aseguran que el tal arte es de orígen propio: no porque deba uno fiarse demasiado de la semejanza, ó falta de ella, en las palabras para emitir un juicio de tal naturaleza—antes al contrario, es de advertir que los Matacos siempre hacen lo que pueden por no adoptar palabras extranjeras para expresar cosas nuevas, remediándose con las propias mediante alguna modificación—pero es el caso que no nos hallamos al frente de uno de estos circunloquios. Otro motivo de error podría resultar de la imposibilidad que ellos tienen de pronunciar á nuestro modo; y por otra parte, la costumbre de dar á las voces la forma más adecuada á la índole de la lengua de ellos; como cuando de *cabra* hacen *caillá*, y de *Pedro*, *Peiló*.

Oficio de las mujeres es todo aquello que tiene que ver con cargar peso, hacer los toldos, hacer ollas, cocinar, tejer, buscar raíces, y de ellas también, fabricar las redes. La caza, la pesca, fabricar armas, la guerra, toca á los hombres; *melear*, esto es buscar miel en los bosques, en que abunda, y recoger fruta, es oficio común de ambos. Yo supongo que este quehacer en común tiene por causa que tales cosechas deben hacerse dentro del período obligatorio de su madurez, y por lo tanto querrán utilizar para ello todos los brazos al objeto de acopiarlas en mayor cantidad.

Para hacer las redes, como es natural, empiezan por hacer la piola, que llaman *niñ'hiói*: la materia textil la sacan de una *bromelia*, que en Quichua se llama *cháguar* (nombre que ahora también usan los cristianos), y en Mataco *hüié*. Enrían las hojas de esta planta por un tiempo, después con una concha de ostra las peinan. Concluida que sea esta faena las ponen á secar y á blanquear en el sol, y al fin tuercen la hebra teniendo el manojo con la izquierda y refregándolo

sobre la pierna, sobre la que polvorean un poco de yeso para no lastimarse: á esto llaman *maccotác-muc*, polvo de yeso.

Fabricada la piola de esta suerte, hacen de ella, no sólo redes, sino también sogas, á que dan el nombre de *niñ'hioi-less*, que quiere decir, familia ó madeja de hilos.

Para las armas hay algunos especialmente hábiles, que las hacen y cambian por otras cosas entre sus compañeros. Emplean ellos palo muy duro y pesado, y tendones de avestruz ó lonjas de cuero para las cuerdas de los arcos. El asta de la flecha es de caña, la punta es de algún palo duro, muchas veces calzada con hueso y provista de una serie de barbas á los costados, como las de un anzuelo.

CAPITULO V.

COSTUMBRES MATRIMONIALES

Quien no conozca la sociabilidad de los indios salvajes, ó tal vez crea que la vida de ellos sea estéril, moral y materialmente. Y no obstante no es así: el salvaje ama, odia, sabe lo que son ambiciones, goces, peligros, glorias. Sabe lo que es religión y miedo. Y en estas sociedades primitivas se experimentan todos los afectos humanos: precisamente *como entre los cristianos*—así me decía Faustino cuando le preguntaba acerca de las experiencias íntimas en el modo de vivir de los indios.

La mujer también entre ellos es una pasión de las principales; y aunque á los cristianos puede parecerles demasiado deprimida al verla andar cargada, á la par del hombre, que sólo lleva las armas, sin embargo no por eso recibe peor trato que la inmensa mayoría de las mujeres entre nosotros; porque carece de importancia la excepción de esas pocas damas nuestras que no sacan su fatiga en razón de que pagan á otros para que lo hagan por ellas.

Por otra parte los Indios cuando caminan es con la intención de cazar y con el recelo de tener que batirse. ¿Cómo pues podrían asegurar la ofensa y la defensa siendo ellos los cargados?

Lo contrario es lo cierto: el rol de la mujer en la sociabilidad india está perfectamente ajustado á las necesidades sociales y á sus aptitudes físicas. Ella no caza, no pesca, ni se bate, sino que cuida de la casa, de la cocina y de la familia, y es hacendosísima. Ora va en busca de raíces, ora de frutas de la selva; ora tisa el chaguar, y lo hila; ora hace redes, hace bolsas y teje; ora prepara la comida, repara la casa, pone á fermentar las bebidas para los hombres, conserva las

provisiones; ora ayuda al compañero á sembrar poniendo los granos en los agujeros de los muy escasos surcos; ora cuida de la cosecha... y es madre.

En todas las tolderías en que he estado, me ha sorprendido ese conjunto de hogar nuestro campesino en el modo de ocuparse las mujeres, siempre empleadas en la labor. Mujer se dice en mataco *tziná*, *y quiécua* ó *chécua*, y esta última palabra quiere decir también esposa.

Un indio puede tener varias mujeres, pero raras veces las conserva en el mismo toldo; el número depende del caudal de que disponga el marido para mantener las diversas familias; riqueza real no puede existir entre estos nómades, sino riqueza mobiliaria, por decirlo así, que puede consistir en pieles, en ganados, en las aptitudes para la labor y para el pillaje que le sean propios al hombre.

Muy pocos, y acaso ningunos, son los caciques que tengan una sóla mujer. La mujer puede ser repudiada, y en ese caso vuelve á ser dueña de sí; pero raras veces se vuelve á casar, porque casi siempre sucede que ha perdido ya los atractivos de la juventud, y porque no pierde la esperanza de que el marido torne á acordarse de ella, y porque se lo impide la vergüenza por ante la tribu. Una repudiación empero casi siempre da lugar á disgustos y á venganzas entre las familias.

En lugares como estos en que la mujer pierde temprano todo atractivo, y donde las contínuas guerras diezman á los hombres, la costumbre de la poligamia es una necesidad social para la tribu, que de lo contrario vendría á quedar sin gente, y una necesidad física para el hombre y para muchas mujeres, porque de otra manera quedarían solteras. Sin embargo no faltan mujeres perdidas y pródigas de sus favores, para las cuales se reserva el nombre de *amaccue*.

El indio es celoso y cruel con la mujer á quien atribuye infidelidad. En circunstancias que visitábamos la toldería de Peiló, tuvimos ocasión de oir como un marido allá en lo interior de su toldo castigaba y amenazaba de muerte á una mujer que le parecía al marido no haber andado bastante lista en sustraerse de las chanzas de un soldado: *Nu-a-ilon-lá* (te mataré), gruñía entre dientes. Y otra vez una mujer, después de dos años de ausencia del marido, se había juntado con otro; de regreso aquél se pone en acecho, la persigue, la alcanza y le abre la barriga de una puñalada antes que los cristianos pudieran impedírselo. Esta mujer no murió, y así que sanó volvió á juntarse con su asesino.

Cuando los indios pretenden casarse se tiñen de rojo los pómulos, los carrillos y los huecos de los ojos. A su amada el hombre hace su declaración acompañándola con tal cual regalo, y si la mujer da

el sí, el hombre le da la dote de lo que tenga, como ser ovejas, gallinas, pieles, etc.

Si las familias aprueban la unión de los desposados van á vivir cerca de una de ellas, de lo contrario mudan de toldo y á menudo también de toldería. Obtenido el consentimiento, la ceremonia nupcial es su consumación.

Entre los Chiriguanos, cuando un hombre quiere pedir una muchacha le pone á la puerta un haz de leña y una corzuela ú otro comestible; si á la mañana siguiente se ve que la mujer enciende el fuego y prepara la comida con los objetos presentados, se considera aceptada la propuesta, y el pretendiente acude á la mesa preparada. Algunos quieren que tal costumbre sea también de los Matacos; mas los datos que acerca de ello he podido reunir, no me permiten confirmar el hecho.

Los caciques Chiriguanos empero, tienen un privilegio y es, que no pueden ser rechazados por sus predilectas: esta predilección en fin es para ellos su suerte. El cacique manifiesta su inclinación con el ofrecimiento de una presa de carne ú otra cosa; la muchacha la cocina, y desde luego comparten mesa y casa. Los caciques. especialmente los generales, es decir los que tienen á su mando varias tolderias, tienen por lo menos una mujer en cada toldería.

Dos é tres días después de la época del parto la madre y la criatura se lavan, ni dura más tiempo la reclusión de la parturienta.

El padre reconoce al hijo y con estas palabras lo toma en los brazos:—«Este es mi hijo». En algunas tribus se acostumbra que el marido se eche en cama cuando pare la mujer, como acto de reconocimiento; y entre los chiriguanos el hombre toma su lugar al lado de la mujer y por tres días se hace atender como sí hubiese..... dado á luz! Después se levanta mas no sale á viaje, ni trabaja hasta los siete días en que se levanta también la mujer y se lava. Mientras están de parto los cónyuges no prueban más que agua y mazamorra que es una comida de maíz muy líquida, y caldo de porotos; de la carne se abstienen.

Sucede con frecuencia que un hombre tenga dos y más hermanas simultáneamente por esposas. Creo también poder asegurar que el padre una que otra vez no desdeña ni á su propia hija. Si no hay quien reconozca y reclame por suya á la criatura, la madre puede matarla.

Los indios son habilísimos parteros: los mismos cristianos se valen de ellos. Dicen que tienen un acierto extraordinario en aprovechar el momento de la crisis, y que entónces sostienen á la paciente en postura más ó menos recta, y hasta parece que la sacuden, pero sin hacerle nada. A ello agregan palabras á que los indios atribuyen

virtud, y mucho más los cristianos que no las entienden. ¡Así sucede siempre!

No se crea empero, que en eso de enamorar sólo se valgan de una pantomima más ó menos expresiva, porque también tienen palabras y expresiones y lenguaje que bien se prestan á las manifestaciones gentiles y de las cuales se sirven. Bien conocido de todos es lo armoniosa que es la lengua guaraní, y si se quiere demasiado. en boca de los varones y en la de los Chiriguanos, de quienes también es la lengua patria; mas también los Matacos, los cerriles Matacos, que parecen ser los últimos en la escala antropológica de estos indios de la América del Sur, tienen sus expresiones armoniosas y las ideas gentiles que á ellas corresponden.

Me acuerdo de una vez á bordo que se hallaba allí una india bien parecida, que estaba muda, impasible y hasta mustia. Me sopló Faustino: «Dígale *a-aiss*, con expresión»: se lo digo al oído: *a-aiss*, y la bella india apesar suyo soltó los labios con una imperceptible sonrisa porque yo le había dicho: «¡¡tú eres muy linda!!». En otra ocasión había acudido yo á una toldería para presenciar la curación de un enfermo hecha por los médicos indios; allí se hallaba también una jóven que es la india más linda que hasta ahora he visto.

Se nos reunió un teniente y me dijo en voz alta, *¡qué buena moza che!—Como no*,—respondí yo. Y la india állá en la vislumbre:—*Teniente toj tzi-la-taj*, que quiere decir: «El teniente sí que es lindo»; mas lo dijo con tanta gracia de voz y con un movimiento entre ingenuo y malicioso, tapándose el rostro detrás de las espaldas de otro que estaba allí, lanzando al propio tiempo una mirada tan chispeante, que yo envidié de veras al lindo teniente allá en mis adentros.

He aquí un diálogo entre dos jóvenes:

El.—¿Quién será aquella bonita que tanto me está gustando?

Ella.—¿Quién será aquel lindito que lo estoy queriendo tanto?

Este es un refrancito de mimos, que parece lo usan mucho.

Después acercándose:

El.—Cada vez que te veo me da gana de llevarte: quien sabe si un día no caes en mis brazos.

Ella.—Quien sabe, caminando andamos.

El.—Si me quieres, déjame hacerte cariños.

Ella.—No me debes hacer cariños porque me quieres: tú tienes dueña.

El.—No tengo quien me pueda decir nada; soy sólo, y si no fuese sólo no te hablaría así.—¡Adios! mañana me voy: estaré ausente dos años. . .

Ella.—¡Oh . . . . . lo siento! «Me te voy á echar ménos si te vas. . . .

El.—No te quieras casar en ese tiempo . . . . . te traeré collar, pañuelo de taparte, agujas é hilo . . . . ¡Adios!

1: Pelleschi S17 Mataco

Ella.—Adios . . . . vuelve pronto.

Me abstengo de poner la versión mataca por temor de aburrir. Dígaseme empero si en este diálogo apuntado por mí no se hallan los mismos sentimientos y expresiones de la raza nuestra.

Un matrimonio que se celebra en toda regla va acompañado con bebidas fermentadas preparadas con las vainas del algarrobo y del vinal, y con miel de los bosques; de todo lo cual trataré en el capítulo siguiente.

CAPÍTULO VI

BEBIDAS FERMENTADAS
PRODUCTOS NATURALES DE USO DOMÉSTICO

El algarrobo es para estos lugares lo que el castaño para la Europa, en cuanto á los servicios que presta á las poblaciones que viven en su región, que por observación he hallado se extiende de los 100 á los 400 metros sobre el nivel del mar, y por lo que respecta á la posición geográfica, entre los 30 y los 15° de latitud austral, entre la falda de la Cordillera y el mar. No quiere la humedad, que lo hace huir aún de aquellas alturas y latitudes que le son propias: y al contrario, en un clima excepcionalmente seco y cálido, lo he encontrado aún á los 700 metros sobre el nivel del mar; pero siempre en lo llano.

El algarrobo se puede decir que se presenta junto con los bosques en estas regiones; y forma selvas enteras sin otro árbol; se mezcla también y muy amenudo con otros, y á mi juicio es el árbol más generalizado; mereciendo por lo tanto, y por la importancia que tiene, dar nombre á una región ó zona forestal. En efecto él se halla tanto en los bosques de terrenos que han surgido del seno de las aguas, en la época de la elevación de estas regiones, cuanto en aquellos de terrenos formados por el aluvión de los ríos actuales.

La madera del algarrobo es inmejorable para las más de las construcciones (abajo de techo) y trabajos de carpintería, pero por lo general tiene el defecto de ser corta: del tronco suda una resina negra que no la utilizamos nosotros, aunque sí los indios. El fruto tiene la forma de una vaina, que contiene harina algo dulce, la que sirve para hacer pan y bebidas fermentadas.

Allí hay tres clases de algarrobos: el blanco que da vainas en color y dimensión como nuestros porotos blancos, de que se hace una bebida buena, y podrían dar también harina. El negro con vainas como los porotos con ojos, que dan una bebida inferior, y el algarrobo di-

cho del *patay*, cuyas vainas, como nuestros porotos blancos, son gordas y dan mucha y excelente harina, con que hacen el pan, llamado en lengua quichúa *patay*. Los primeros dos tienen las hojas sencillamente compuestas, esto es, una hoja formada de pares de hojitas colocadas á lo largo del eje; y sólo tienen pequeñas espinas en los ángulos de las hojas; el último tiene las hojas descompuestas, esto es, con las hojitas subdivididas en tantos pares de otras casi microscópicas, como sucede con el *churqui (Acacia Cavenia)*: éste tiene espinas de 10 á 15 centímetros de largo, pero no gruesas.

Para hacer el patay, que sólo se hace en Santiago y en Catamarca, en la cuenca de los *Pueblos de Belen*, se pone algarroba seca, y apta para ser molida, bajo un mazo de madera dura ó de piedra, que se mueve con una palanca larga; la algarroba así molida se hace harina sin quebrantar las semillas que son durísimas. Después ciernen la harina más ó menos bien, la meten y la comprimen en una ollita caldeada previamente, ó al sol; ó al lado del fuego: tapan ésta con arena fina hasta la boca y la exponen de nuevo, ó al sol, ó al fuego lento, y por poco tiempo. En diez minutos el patay está hecho, porque la caldeada no tiene otro objeto que el de derretir la miel contenida en la harina, á fin de que todo se haga una sola maza, que resulta durísima luego que se enfría la miel. Así se forman panes de cuatro á seis libras, y más, que se acomodan en las alforjas, que se ponen en la grupa del caballo, y proporcionan un alimento riquísimo si bien un poco empalagoso; en algo se parece á la harina de las castañas. Puesta una tajada de esto al fuego sobre la hoja de un cuchillo se saca un bocado verdaderamente número uno, ya por el olor, ya por el sabor. *Aloja* es el nombre argentino, (1) que se da allí á las bebidas fermentadas: en Quichua se llama *chicha* (2) y en mataco *hú-ná*; en Mocoví, *ná-ná* y *nánn-ná*, en Vilela *tsúc-cué*.

Para hacerla, tanto en el Perú como entre los indios salvajes, se acostumbra mascar una parte de la sustancia que después se mezcla con lo demás. Tal porción sirve de levadura; porque la saliva contiene, como sabemos, la *diastacia*, que se encuentra en los cotilédones de las semillas, por la cual las sustancias amilacias se convierten en glucosa, ó azúcar de uva, con lo que se hacen solubles en el agua y fermentables, produciendo así alcohol. El indio ignora todo esto, mas siendo como es observador atentísimo, ha descubierto el efecto de una operación que tantas nauseas causa á los cristianos que la ven practicar.

Esta misma operación se usaba en la China para la preparación

(1) Cacan (?) Ed.

(2) Chicha es de maiz Ed. Ver: Acca y Asua.

del pan, y en las Indias Orientales para las bebidas fermentadas. Entre nosotros ¿quién no conoce la costumbre de las amas, y de las madres, de mascar la «papa» antes de darle la cucharadita á la criatura? No obstante la inconciencia de quien la emplea, y de lo ridículo y nauseabundo que es para quien lo vé, esta costumbre responde á un fin utilísimo, y la ciencia lo confirma.

En los toldos se suele ver vasos de madera ó de barro en que la gente vá á escupir las vainas que han mascado durante el día. Aparte de esto, mujeres y muchachos á cierta hora se ponen á despedazar y mascarlas, y los chiquillos allí se divierten agarrando puñados de vainas con sus manecitas rechonchas, echándoselas en la boca y escupiéndolas y volviéndolas á escupir dentro de los vasos. Muchas veces se reunen allí también los grandes, y entónces la preparación de la aloja sirve de ocasión para jarana. La parte no mascada la muelen en un mortero, que siempre se hace de *yuchan*, árbol del que hablaré más tarde. Todo junto lo pasan á un mortero formado de un sólo tronco de aquel árbol, y en seguida lo mezclan con agua como para hacer dos ó tres barriles de aloja cada vez.

A las doce horas está hecha ya la aloja; tiene un sabor agridulce y un color amarillento. Aquel picante que tiene le dá muy buen paladar. Yo la prefiero allí á cualquier bebida, incluso el mismo vino. Tomada en cantidad emborracha, pero es una borrachera que pasa luego y no descompone. Al menos así he visto que sucede con los demás.

La época de la madurez de la algarroba corresponde á la del *vinal*, que es menos bueno, pero sirve para aloja. Antes que éste madura el *chañar*, que dá una fruta dulzona, redonda, más bien pequeña, amarilla, de carozo, que se come cruda y que también se cuece; de esta fruta se hace arrope que sabe bien y es medicinal, al decir de los del campo, para la tos y para el asma. El *chañar* mientras es nuevo tiene las hojas y tronco casi como de tamarindo; las ramas parecen de eucalipto.

Poco después de la algarroba viene el *mistol* que es nuestro azufaifo, pero con cierta diferencia: del fruto mezclado con harina de algarroba, se hace patay, y se conserva también en cueros bien pisoneado. Al mismo tiempo que estas frutas maduran, cual primera, cual después, todas las demás, en el Chaco, donde hace más calor en Octubre y Diciembre (meses de primavera y de estío), y más al sud, hacia Tucumán, en Noviembre y Febrero.

En virtud del tiempo que hacen durar algunas de estas frutas, por medio de la conservación, la estación en que se alimentan de ellas sobre todo si ha sido abundante, la cosecha dura de 4 á 5 meses, y es el carnaval de los indios.

Estos para conservar la algarroba hacen unos tolditos que colocan sobre cuatro postes, á fin de que no les falte la ventilación y también para librarla de las hormigas y otros insectos. Dá gusto ver estas cupolitas que se levantan por encima de los toldos á manera de nuestras torrecillas. Cada toldería se complace en tener más que las otras. Del mismo modo conservan el vinal y algunas raíces y frutas que se pueden y deben cocinar secas.

Cuando la aloja está madura, que suele ser á las once del día, los hombres todos se reunen en torno del cangilon de *yuchan*, sentados á la musulmana; después, con dos ó tres mates huecos y con mangos, sacan el líquido y se lo pasan unos á otros. Mientras tanto conversan de sus cosas: de las guerras, de las cosechas, de las novedades, de los chismes y largan la carcajada á propósito de cualquier aventura curiosa ó de cualquier *quid pro quo*. Así se están tres, cuatro y más horas. Cuando se acaba el licor se lanzan sobre la parte sólida que queda como heces de vino. Las mujeres y los chiquillos no participan de nada de ésto.

Estiman en mucho la algarroba. Un famoso cacique general, que los cristianos llamaban *Granadero*, por su alto, y los matacos, *Quiatzutaj*, que quiere decir *Vilelon*, por su nación y su tamaño, cuando le pregunté como le iba, respondió:—«Bien.... yo.... yo rico.... yo teniendo.... mucha.... algarroba.... yo rico.» Y son avaros de la algarroba y de la aloja, al grado que no la cambian sino allá una tal que vez por otra cosa: con mezquindad y á duras penas es que convidan á participar de ella.

Una mañana dí con un pelotón de unos cuarenta indios que rodeaban un *yuchan* de aloja; eso que me presenté, y tan luego como me conocieron, todos se pusieron á gritar: Juan, Juan.... *yúc-cu-ás*.... *yuc-cu-as*, (tabaco, tabaco).... y yo: *hué-ni-tdé: niquiocld pac* (no tengo, más tarde les daré): recién me invitaron á beber con ellos, y, á mi primera negativa, no insistieron por segunda vez, diciéndome el cacique:—«No hijito.... no.... nosotros.... tománno.... tú dánno.... tauáco» (1). Se trataba de cumplidos, algo á lo indio, es cierto, pero apesar de todo eran cumplidos. Y yo por hacerles el gusto hacía alguna fuerza por hablarles algunas palabras en su lengua y acabé por despedirme con: *Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet.... nutpinlá pac.... niquioc-lá yuc-cu-as*.... (Adios, me voy á casa.... en seguida volveré.... daré tabaco). Y todos ellos llenos de gusto, porque hablaba en la lengua de ellos y les prometía tabaco, gritaban:—*Amecná*.... *Amecná*.... *tapil*.... *ccaelitt* (Adios, adios, vuelve en seguida). Volví después de dos ó tres horas con los bolsillos reventando de tabaco

(1) Forma gerundiva, i. q., *tomando* y *dando*.

picado y los encontré aún allí á todos bebiendo; apenas me vieron me hicieron acordar de la promesa que yo creí hubiesen olvidado en medio de los humos de la borrachera. Se lo distribuí, y lo acabé; ellos persistieron en pedirme más: aquí revolví los bolsillos gritándoles: *namhuen, namhuen* (no tengo más). Ellos satisfechos con la elocuencia de la demostración, concluyeron con un *hée, hée,* que quiere decir «bien, bien»; pero se olvidaron de volverme á brindar la aloja.

A propósito de las salutaciones: estos indios acostumbran golpear suave y amistosamente el pecho de la visita con el puño medio cerrado, acompañando las caricias con expresiones cariñosas, como la de *hée, hée,* etc.—¡Bueno, bueno! etc.

Es digno de notarse que á pesar de ser tan chupadores, estos indios no beben durante la comida ni agua. A bordo los convidados que teníamos rehusaban toda bebida mientras comían. Después de comer preferían tomar agua agachándose á orillas del río y echándose el agua en la boca con la mano.

Los indios son muy pedigüeños y mezquinos de lo propio, para con los cristianos: se comprende, son pobres.

Se me ocurre hacer mención de una cosa, aunque sea fuera de lugar, no sea que después me olvide.

Los muchachos hasta los ocho ó diez años tienen la barriga desproporcionada, y tanto que se la suelen comprimir con una faja á la altura del ombligo. Más tarde la pierden y se hacen hombres bien proporcionados.

Me parece del caso decir que el algarrobo pertenece á la familia nuestra de las garrobas *(ceratonia silicua),* y los botánicos le dan el nombre científico *prosopis algarrobo.* Inmensa es la importancia que tiene en la economía doméstica de los salvajes y de la gente del campo. Por eso merece atención. La copa alcanza á diez y más metros de diámetro, pero no es muy densa, sea por el número de las hojas, sea más bien por su forma tan recortada: no por eso deja de dar bastante sombra. La corteza es muy áspera y se parece á la de la vid.

El vinal *(prosopis ruscifolia)* es un arbol algo petizo, pero de copa bastante amplia; se distingue por unas espinas de 10 á 15 centímetros de largo que miden hasta más de un centímetro de grueso, y cuando hincán son muy peligrosas: las hojas, que son del tamaño de las de la acacia, pero más agudas y algo ásperas, dicen que son un remedio muy eficaz para la vista.

El nombre científico del chañar es *gurliœa decorticans;* del mistol, *ziziphus mistol.*

Todas estas frutas son devoradas con avidez por toda clase de bestias, y la algarroba y el vinal constituyen el mejor de los engordes para caballgares y vacunos.

Una fruta que también se encuentra silvestre aunque escasa, al menos por lo que á mi me consta, es el ciruelo: esta fruta sabe bien y es tanto más agradable por lo escasa que es.

Durante el carnaval de la aloja son frecuentes las riñas, peleas y muertes: y no sólo entre los indios, sino también entre los cristianos del Chaco.

Ahora dos palabras sobre el *yuchán*, llamado también *palo borracho*. Es una bombacea, cuyo nombre científico es *chorisia insignis*, podría llamarse el árbol del algodón; tiene una forma extraña que justifica el nombre vulgar. El tronco tiene la forma de una botija de aceite, esto es, angosto al pie, ancho en el medio y otra vez estrecho donde se bifurca la copa. El tronco alcanza hasta los dos metros de diámetro; está lleno de chichones con púas, y, cuando más, llega á los cuatro ó cinco metros de alto, y muchas veces se le ve acompañado de otro que se cría de la base, como también que la copa empieza con sólo dos ramas que después se subdividen, y forman una ancha copa de ocho, diez y más metros de diámetro; las hojas son como las del nogal nuestro, pero algo más pequeñas y dan buena sombra.

De la corteza del tronco se sacan tiras que sirven para liar; se usa para los techos, para envolver y ceñir los manojos de tabaco, y para cualquiera otra labor análoga. Del tronco hacen los indios sus canoas, todas de una sola pieza: para eso no hacen más que ahuecarlo con una herramienta cualquiera, porque es blando el palo mientras está fresco, y se hace más duro que el alcornoque, pero esponjoso como este, cuando está seco. Los matacos llamaná la canoa *cuóu quiác* en la lengua de ellos, esto es, «pato».

Pero la especialidad principal del *yuchán* es su fruto, que en forma y dimensiones es como el limon. Cuando está maduro, lo que suele suceder desde Noviembre hasta Enero, según el lugar, los limones se parten en cuatro y asoma un plumazo de algolón como nieve, que poco á poco se derrama.

Un limón abierto tiene el tamaño de un puño grande; de estos limones el árbol produce de á centenares y todos los años.

Los indios hacen algún uso del algodón, no así los cristianos, sin embargo he visto en Catamarca, donde es corto el número de estos árboles, telas blancas fabricadas de este material y premiadas en la exposición de Córdoba.

En el Chaco tenemos una inmensa cantidad de *yuchanes* que crecen mezclados con árboles de madera dura en los terrenos de emersión: si á este algodón se le halla alguna aplicación industrial, el *yuchán*, y el *cháguar*, cuya fibra sirve para hacer cables, como se en-

cuentran en una inmensa extensión de territorio y crecen sin cultivo, representarán dos artículos de gran provecho.

Otro árbol interesante para los usos domésticos, y acaso industriales, es el *pacará (enterolobium timboiva)*; es un hermoso árbol, uno de los más altos, de los más gruesos, de los más copudos, de los más bellos: las hojas son las de nuestro sorbo, pero algo más grandes; es una mimosa. El fruto es una vaina chata, oblonga, enroscada, color castaño oscuro, de una pulgada y medio de largo, y contiene de 12 á 15 % de *saponina*: esta fruta se emplea para desgrasar la ropa y la lana.

Para concluir como habíamos empezado, diré que los indios son aficionadísimos á las bebidas que acostumbran los cristianos y se alzan unas borracheras de quedar tendidos. Parecidos hasta en esto á los que no son sus hermanos en Cristo.

CAPÍTULO VII

GUERRAS

Los indios son aficionados á la guerra, hay que confesarlo; porque se baten continuamente; es, permítaseme la expresión, un continuo dar y recibir.

A una guerra se le sigue otra, ya sea para desagraviarse los vencidos de las pérdidas sufridas, ya porque les ha entrado á gustar á los vencedores. Motivo es para una guerra el haber pescado, ó cazado ó cosechado en territorio ageno, ó tener que vengar una ofensa, ó bien la esperanza de botín.

No son empero guerras estratégicas, en que una batalla sigue á otra hasta dejarlo al enemigo imposibilitado para la defensa; son sor, presas, asaltos á las tolderías para someterlas al pillaje y llevarse bestias, muchachos y á veces también á las mujeres.

Es por esto que en las regiones boscosas, las tolderías siempre tienen á los flancos y á las espaldas bosques en que se puedan refugiar los sorprendidos, en los que es imposible perseguirlos por haber allí un laberinto de senderos conocidos sólo por los habitantes de la tal ó cual tolderia.

Para reunirse después en un lugar común, á más de las indicaciones de los rastros que quedan, se valen de ese otro, el de torcer algunas ramas ó algunos manojos de yerba en las encrucijadas, para que sepan los compañeros, prevenidos anticipadamente de la señal convenida.

Otro modo de comunicarse son los fuegos. Durante nuestra marcha por el Chaco nos hallamos siempre rodeados de fogatas á mayor ó menor distancia, fogatas que á veces toman las proporciones de colosales incendios. Y tantas veces, cuando creíamos que nos hallábamos en la más completa soledad, nos sucedía que al llegar cerca de una indiada nos hacían saber que nos esperaban, y oíamos contar el orden observado en nuestra marcha.

Emplean sin embargo, también muchos espías y bomberos; en Mataco los primeros se llaman *niguaiecque*, y los segundos, *gu'éicdss*.

Algo de ordenamiento táctico parece que observan: así tienen un cacique general, caciques simples y capitanejos. En Mataco al primero lo llaman *canniat tizán*, á los segundos, *canniat;* á los últimos no sé como los llamarán.

Los caciques generales son elegidos en segunda instancia, es decir, de entre los caciques simples, y éstos son elegidos por el pueblo, el cual prefiere por lo general á los hijos del finado; siempre que sean adultos, valientes y buenos. Por lo demás también en estas elecciones median las mismas pasiones que entre nosotros.

Tienen también otra categoría de personages, que llaman *nydt:* correspondería al «*caballero*» español y al «*galantuomo*» de los italianos del Sud. Así llaman *nydt* á los cristianos que les parecen de alguna categoría. Se presume que entre los demás indios se acostumbre una distinción análoga. En el Perú, y donde se habla la lengua quichua, llaman á los caballeros *Viracocha*.

Una vez electo el cacique general, los electores van á visitarlo cuando pueden, y las tales visitas se celebran con las acostumbradas bebendurrias y comilonas. Un cacicazgo general casi siempre abraza tolderías distantes entre sí.

Al que los visita los matacos llaman *tzicki-dc*. Estas autoridades, entre los indios del Chaco, tienen un valer casi puramente militar: en tiempo de paz pierden casi toda su influencia, no siendo aquella de las «*relaciones exteriores*» por la cual representan la tribu ante los de afuera, sea para tratar de algún asunto, sea para combinar alguna guerra ó alguna paz. Y ni aún así se impone esta acción de ellos, porque los de su tribu, la chusma, son dueños de negarse á ir á la guerra, si bien su amor propio rara vez les permite quedarse.

Cuando un cacique pretende dar un asalto, toma el parecer de los ancianos y de las personas de influencia, y si éstos no aprueban convida que lo sigan los que quieran.

A veces, empero, combinan con anticipación ciertas invasiones, poniéndose de acuerdo entre diversos caciques de varias tolderías. Cuando nosotros llegamos á la toldería del Chaguaral, allí encontramos 11 ó 13 caciques reunidos. todos matacos, que esperaban á todos

los aliados. con los cuales, de hecho, poco después invadieron el territorio de otros matacos, que tres meses antes les habían dado una buena zamarreada.

Cuando marchan á la guerra lanzan gritos de amenaza y alegría, y se tiñen de negro parte de la cara y del cuerpo, y á veces se alborotan aún más su ya bien alborotada cabellera, hasta parecer «almas en pena», al decir de un indio cristiano. En vísperas de la batalla el que las tiene se llena de plumas la cabeza, la cintura y los tobillos, prefiriendo las de color rojo ó amarillo; y cualquier trapo que se llevan consigo se lo fajan bien tirante á la cintura, y en el momento de la pelea prorrumpen en gritos aterradores.

Esto de embijarse para la guerra es propio de casi todos los salvajes: se acostumbraba también entre aquellos que los romanos llamaban bárbaros; por ejemplo, según Claudiano los Sigambros antes de la batalla se teñían la cabellera de un rojo vivo.

Los caciques tienen el puesto de honor en lo más recio de la batalla, de lo que siempre resulta la muerte de alguno de ellos. Si vencen los invasores, saquean todo, capturan las mujeres, los muchachos y las bestias, reparten el botín y pegan fuego á la toldería.

No dan cuartel á los guerreros y es raro que perdonen la vida á las presas que sean de alguna edad, porque les tienen recelo ya como espías, ya como malas maestras de los muchachos que se llevan; y si son viejas las desprecian como seres inútiles. Pero á los niños de menos de 10 ó 12 años, cuando mucho, se los llevan consigo prisioneros para criarlos como guerreros y maridos, en bien de la tribu.

Esta costumbre no debe parecernos más bárbara que aquella que en tiempo de los romanos tenían los Escitas, habitantes entre el Don y el Danubio, que degollaban á los prisioneros para evitarse del trabajo de custodiarlos en medio de su vida nómade. ¿Y qué podremos decir de ésto, cuando los romanos ya cristianizados arrojaban sus prisioneros al circo para ser ultimados por las fieras y escarnecidos por el populacho?

Hago estas comparaciones para hacer constar que el hombre es el mismo en todas partes y siempre.

Con estos medios resolutivos se evita la vergüenza y el peligro de la esclavitud, al fin y al cabo cosa incompatible con la vida nómade que llevan, con sus contínuas guerras, hasta con la escasez de víveres, y finalmente con el caracter independiente propio del indio, que prefiriría matar y hacerse matar antes que ser esclavo. No obstante considérese la influencia extraordinaria que pueda tener tal costumbre en la existencia y distribución de las tribus, si se piensa que una sucesión de victorias de una ó más tribus coaligadas puede en un momento producir la completa destrucción ó desaparición de otras.

El que mata á un enemigo se lleva por trofeo, si tiene tiempo de arrancarlo, el pericráneo de la cabeza, con los cabellos, con las orejas y hasta con una lonja de la piel de la parte trasera del cuello: este pericráneo lo amoldan en forma de taza con un junco ó rama flexible, que aseguran y cosen á la vuelta de la orilla del mismo; en seguida, chorreando sangre aún, lo llenan de licor y asido por los cabellos lo vacían y lo hacen girar tomando en honor del vencedor y escarnio del vencido. Después de algunas vueltas, tomando la taza por la orilla, hacen chorrear el licor por los cabellos y lo reciben en las bocas abiertas para el efecto.

Yo tenía una de estas cabelleras que había pertenecido á un cacique toba, que lo mató un mataco amigo, cuando se efectuó aquella invasión que se estaba preparando en el Chaguaral, eso que pasamos nosotros por allí. La polilla me la puso en tal estado que no tuve más remedio que arrojarla á la basura, porque ya no servía para mandarla á Italia con unos craneos y otros objetos que había reunido yo.

Esta costumbre de rebanar el pericráneo con los cabellos la tienen todos estos indios de por acá, y la tienen también los de la América Septentrional. Pero, lo curioso es, que era costumbre también de los Escitas.

Los Germanos á su vez, acostumbraban aquello de beber en los craneos de los guerreros enemigos que mataban. ¿Quién ignora el hecho del longobardo Albuino, quien hizo que su mujer, la gépida Rosamunda, bebiese en el craneo del padre de ella, hace cosa de 1300 años?

Esta costumbre de los indios me trae á la memoria una escena que demuestra, según me parece, la política de estos salvajes.

Una vez acompañaba al coronel del regimiento, que custodiaba aquella frontera en una de sus visitas periódicas. Cerca de un fuerte, donde se encontraba una tribu de indios, vino á visitarlo un hijo del cacique general; éste no venía porque pretendía que el coronel lo visitase primero á él; pero nos hizo un regalo de aloja de la más rica. Como dió la casualidad que volvía de batirse con los tobas, nosotros le preguntamos si no había traido alguna cabellera. El indio como quien se disculpa de su crueldad, contestó: «Los tobas arrancan las cabelleras á los cristianos y nosotros á los tobas».

En esta ocasión, viéndome los indios vestido de paisano en medio de tantos militares, y al lado del coronel que me trataba con tanta distinción, cuchicheaban entre sí:

—¿Quién será éste? Y los más licurgos respondían:

—¡Debe ser algún presidente!

A mí me parecía al oir estas chácharas que me hallaba en medio de una turba multa de nuestro bajo pueblo.

Es rito guerrero entre estos indios de allá salir á sus expediciones con la luna nueva. Le atribuyen, según parece, una virtud supersticiosa; sin embargo no acostumbran marchar de noche, por miedo á las víboras y á los tigres.

Ya sabemos que las armas son el arco con la flecha, la lanza y la macana, todas de madera: no usan los metales porque no los tienen, y porque ni saben ni los pueden trabajar. Si consiguen algún clavo, ó algún cuchillo ó alguna lata de olla, lo tienen en gran estima, le dan gran valor. Usan también las boleadoras.

Atraviesan cientos de leguas, para hacer la guerra, las andar todos á pie, y en corto tiempo relativamente, porque los indios son unos caminadores estupendos. Desnudos y por lo tanto ligeros como están, acostumbrados á ello, marchan con agilidad sin parecerlo: van descalzos, y desde luego tienen menos necesidad de levantar los pies.

Los jefes no dejan de proclamar á sus guerreros antes de la pelea, y ya á punto de lanzarse les grita el capitán: ¡Compañeros! ya estamos aquí: ¡batíos con valor, no querais disparar aun cuando el enemigo os pise los pies!» Frase que me parece bastante enérgica y al caso, tratándose de los que se baten cuerpo á cuerpo. Al cadáver del enemigo lo despedazan sin misericordia; y á más de rebanarle la cabellera, le arrancan el corazón, le mutilan los miembros y le someten á mil otras crueldades.

Ignoro si descuartizan antes de morir al prisionero, ó si se contentan con degollarlo como carnero antes de destrozarlo. Con nuestro ladino Faustino hicieron así: primero le dieron de flechazos por sorpresa, con lo cual lo voltearon al suelo incapaz de defenderse; en seguida se le fueron encima y lo degollaron, estando aún con vida y consciente: después le cortaron la cabeza, lo amarraron por los pies á un árbol y se pusieron á desnudarlo de todo cuanto llevaba puesto.

He aquí un diálogo entre dos indios después de un combate:

«*1.er Indio*—Ahora te contaré lo que sucedió cuando volvíamos. De repente oigo gritar de atrás:— «Los enemigos están matando á nuestros compañeros allá en lo bajo del camino».

En seguida grito á los míos:—¡Formáos, están matando á los nuestros! no queráis disparar, hacedle frente al enemigo aunque os pise los pies.

2.o Indio—¡Oh, como me hubiese gustado hallarme allí, el mal estuvo en que no os ví cuando salíais.....

1.er Indio—¡Hubieses visto! Allí nos metimos con las lanzas y con las macanas y luego no más les habíamos matado una multitud. ¡Oh, allí nos hemos vengado!

Ahora sí que estoy contento: quedamos á mano. A uno le rebanamos la cabellera, á uno le cortamos las manos, á otro le arrancamos

el corazón y no faltó á quien le cortásemos....., á muchos le cortamos la cabeza.....»

Y así seguía haciendo descripción minuciosa de todas las proezas, Ellos deben atribuir alguna virtud á los miembros del enemigo. Me acuerdo de una vez que me llevaba tres cráneos de matacos, alzados de donde cuatro años antes se había dado muerte á una cuarentena de indios que habían caido prisioneros: de todas esas cabezas, las crecientes no habían dejado más que las que yo logré desenterrar.

Estos cráneos los conduje unas diez leguas hasta mi rancho en las fronteras, y los puse en mi cuarto abajo de la mesita que me servía de escritorio.

Una noche de temporal oigo un ruido cerca de la puerta que estaba abierta: la escasa luz de la vela de sebo no servía más que para deslumbrar, por lo cual no podía distinguir bien una cosa negra que se movia en la oscuridad del cuarto. ¿Quién es? grito yo, echando mano como era de suponer del revolver que estaba allí sobre la mesa. *Amicco..... amicco..... no más*, y avanza un tamaño cacique mataco con un su compañero que le seguía *¿Qué queriendo, amigo?* repuse yo: *Toba etec* (la cabeza del toba), me contestó. Yo cojo un cráneo y se lo entrego, agregando;—*Toba catchia* (toba malo). En esto el indio agarra el cráneo, medio fuera de sí, con la izquierda, y con la derecha empezó á clavar los dedos en los ojos y en la boca de la calavera y después de cada vez en la boca propia, como quien los chupa, y al mismo tiempo saltaba y daba gritos confusos.

El tal cacique se había anoticiado de estos cráneos, pero como que eran de los tobas sus mortales enemigos, y había venido una noche con el propósito de celebrar la fiesta.

Desde esa vez queriendo la casualidad que los matacos volvieran de los ingenios de azúcar de la provincia de Salta, que estaban situados á unas sesenta leguas más adentro de donde yo me hallaba, me sucedió que todos los días, por algún tiempo, se me presentaban pelotones de indios á la puerta á pedirme la cabeza del toba, y yo les complacía con el eterno refrancillo: *toba catchia, catchia*..... y ellos empezaban de nuevo la fiesta de siempre.

CAPITULO VIII

RELIGIÓN

Los indios del Chaco no tienen Dios; no digo tal como lo concibe un pensador ó un filósofo, pero ni como lo acepta el vulgo cristiano ó chino.

Se asegura que los pampas tienen Dios, mas esta creencia debe considerarse como una importación reciente debida al contínuo contacto de los pampas con los cristianos y con sus hermanos de allende la Cordillera convertidos al cristianismo poco después de la conquista.

Si los habitantes del Chaco no saben lo que es Dios tienen empero su culto: culto de las almas y, en embrión, el de las estrellas.

Yo creo que no cabe duda que los indios del Chaco son, civilmente hablando, tan primitivos como los demás indios y salvajes del mundo.

Ahora pues algunos historiadores filósofos nos aseguran que la primera etapa religiosa del hombre es el *fetiquismo*, que equivale á decir la religión de los *fetiches*, palabra con que los negros de Africa indicaban los objetos brutos de su adoración.

Sin negar que esto pueda ser, ó haya podido ser así en cuanto á aquellos pueblos, yo pienso empero, al menos por lo que respecta á los indios de aquí, que deba más bien asegurarse que no sea la primera etapa religiosa el fetiquismo, sino el espiritismo en la forma que más adelante se verá.

Me parece que algunos filósofos, y entre ellos Humboldt en su Cosmos, han notado el mismo hecho y que le han aplicado un nombre que no recuerdo.

Es muy difícil sacarles algo á los indios sobre sus creencias: ellos, apesar de que abrigan un profundo desprecio por lo que respecta á los misterios de los cristianos, rehuyen sin embargo la burla, y las amenazas y las catequizaciones de sus presuntuosos é intolerantes enemigos.

Faustino, cristiano y refugiado entre ellos, preguntado por mí acerca de algunas de las prácticas religiosas, me contestaba:

—Ignoro, señor, porque los indios son muy desconfiados.

Esto que paso á contar lo he recogido de boca de algunos de ellos después de haber logrado inspirarles confianza, conversando con ellos, haciéndoles regalos y tratándolos muy de cerca, y con muestras de mucho aprecio por sus creencias.

Entre los matacos los espíritus se llaman *a'hát*, y entre los vilelas, *cokss*.

Estos espíritus viven abajo de tierra, pero de noche andan errantes por el mundo, cerca de las casas; entran también en las personas y las más de las veces las enferman. Los *a'hot* cabalgan el viento, acompañan, ó son la tempestad misma, y bailan su danza en torno de las tolderías, de los toldos y de las personas que quieren damnificar. El *a'hot* más terrible es la viruela, contra la cual nada pueden los hechiceros; de suerte que al aparecer en una *hauet-éi* (toldería) todos los indios la abandonan á toda prisa, las más de las veces pegándole fuego y abandonando allí á los enfermos. Esto no obstante

la viruela hace su risa debido, según yo pienso, más bien á la falta de precauciones (cosa imposible, según son sus casas y ropaje) que á la falta de policía doméstica y personal, que según lo que me ha parecido es bastante cuidada. Los casos son casi todos mortales, y por eso es que muy pocos son los indios picados de peste.

Todo hombre tiene su alma, que después de muerto él, va tierra abajo á unirse con sus compañeros, entre los cuales goza de una consideración proporcionada á la que era suya en la tierra entre los vecinos de la misma toldería. Esta creencia hace que tengan una especial reverencia por sus finados.

No obstante que los *a'hot* son amigos de andar vagando, no por eso dejan de permanecer en las cercanías del lugar donde murieron los cuerpos á que pertenecían.

El alma de la persona que muere fuera de su lugar, y á quien no se ha dado sepultura en su patrio suelo, vaga solitaria, despreciada y triste en medio de las almas extranjeras.

Yo le pregunté á mi baqueano porque la suerte era tan cruel con estos desgraciados, que sin culpa suya morían y dejaban su cuerpo lejos de su nación, á lo que me contestó: «que para que los cuerpos de éstos hubiesen sido dejados y abandonados allá léjos por sus compañeros en vida, y por los hijos de la misma tribu, señal era que cuando vivos no habían gozado del amor y estimación de los demás; así que los *d'hót* extranjeros al ver comparecer entre ellos á uno de afuera-se sacaban esta cuenta: si éstos, ni por los compañeros en vida, ni por los hijos de la misma tribu en la tierra, fueron honrados con sepultura fraternal, es porque no gozaban ni de amor ni de estimación entre los suyos, desde luego no la merecen tampoco y lo dejan sólo». Repito la gerigonza del *ladino*.

Me hace acordar de la veneración que en todas las naciones se tiene por los sepulcros, y como, en eso de ir las almas de los insepultos errantes, estos indios tienen la misma creencia que los antiguos romanos, según lo expresa tan bellamente Virgilio en las Eneidas.

Estas creencias son la base de las ceremonias para sanar á los enfermos y dar sepultura á los cadáveres.

Pero antes de hacer su descripción, debo llamar la atención también á una especie de culto por algunos astros, muy particularmente entre las mujeres: estos astros son la luna y el lucero de la mañana.

Al salir la luna las mujeres dejan sus toldos y tomándose de las manos hacen rueda y empiezan á dar vuelta rápidamente saltando y gritando en honor del astro argentino.

Lo mismo hacen al asomar el lucero al borde oriental, rogándole sea propicio para la cosecha de algarroba y demás frutas del campo.

También á media noche suelen dejar el dulce sueño, y, unidos hom-

bres y mujeres, saltan y gritan en rueda para ganarse la voluntad del cielo.

En los eclipses del sol y de la luna juntos se reunen á implorar el cese del inexplicable fenómeno, allí empero se las han con un *a'hot* que temen y conjuran.

Estos son los únicos actos de adoración que yo conozco, y ellos demuestran la inclinación de estos salvajes al sabeismo ó religión de los astros; parece sin embargo que el astro mayor no figura entre los objetos de su adoración ó de sus conjuros. Solamente se reunen, según me lo aseguraba el lenguaráz Faustino, á conjurar su reaparición cuando por mucho tiempo permanece tapado por las nubes (cosa bien rara en aquellas regiones) ó si se está armando una tormenta; mas también en este caso es el *d'hot* mismo que conjuran, porque priva á su vista y á sus cuerpos desnudos del astro benéfico.

Se ve pues como entre estos indios también son las mujeres que dan principio á la adoración, y como ellas, pareciéndose en esto á las de las naciones antiguas de los paganos, han encontrado en la pálida luna el elemento que más se ajusta á su condición, y que por lo tanto, más apto es y más dispuesto está á protejerlas; mientras que el sol, que tan poco se les parece, más bien espera la adoración del hombre á quien los miedos, las esperanzas y los ruegos hacen menos impresión.

Idolos no he visto en ninguna parte en que mi curiosidad me ha impulsado á buscarlos, y mis baqueanos siempre me han negado que los tengan. Su ánimo empero no parece distante de acogerlos: y, á más de aquella parcial adoración de los astros que se ha mencionado, es probable que todo objeto natural que se presente con caracteres especiales, ya sea de terror, ya de beneficencia, ya de misterio, les merezca algún no sé qué, que se parezca á adoración.

El ingeniero Braly, que ha viajado en el Chaco cerca del Río Salado, me asegura que los mocovíes de allí ya no quieren abandonar el lugar en donde se encuentra el aerolita que cayó en el siglo pasado, y que fué acompañado de un estruendo horrible y de una luz deslumbrante.

Como quiera que sea, la vida errante de las tribus salvajes del Chaco parece que debería excluir la idolatría.

Vamos: ¿cómo podría una tribu errante cargar á cuestas las huertas que habían de contener las cebollas de los egipcios? En cualquier caso debería excluirse toda cosa incómoda por su volúmen, por su peso, ó por el riesgo que podría correr. ¿Cómo podrían venerar dioses llevados en angas: en sozcos posiciones, ó atados á la soga y chicoteados para que se conserven dóciles, ó no abandonen la tribu durante la marcha?

¿O, cómo conservar el prestigio ó el terror del misterio en medio de las mudanzas? ¿Y, cómo pensar cada uno en el pan de cada día durante la marcha, y en el descrédito de los dioses y de los sacerdotes si fuesen hechos prisioneros y destruidos en medio del camino por enemigos emboscados? Debería pues la idolatría dirigirse á objetos pequeños y que demanden poco cuidado; mas estos son los últimos que llaman la atención y no se pueden conceptuar sino como franja de una tela de mayor extensión, como destellos de los caprichos no saciados de la vulgar adoración, como los santitos intercesores que se apropia el lujo de las casas gentilicias para su uso y consumo.

A parte de esto el hecho notorio de la facilidad con que los indios abandonan su tribu, su cacique y sus hechiceros, y el ningún prestigio de éstos fuera de la pelea ó del peligro, confirma la argumentación precedente.

CAPÍTULO IX

RELIGIÓN

(Continuación)

Para estos indios Dios ó el demonio es la misma cosa, y le dan el mismo nombre, que, como ya se ha dicho, es *a'hot* entre los matacos.

Esta confusión los libra, al menos por lo que respecta al lenguaje, del vicio de la intolerancia, que tanto puede entre nosotros: así ellos llaman á nuestra Iglesia *tohuó-hoto'hi*, que literalmente quiere decir: «aquello que contiene los *a'hot*, esto es, los *a'hohi* ó dioses cristianos».

Al cementerio también dan el mismo nombre, en esto están de acuerdo con los habitantes de aquellos campos, que lo llaman *panteón*, que entre los griegos estaba reservado á los semidioses, y entre nosotros á los grandes ilustres.

En el Chaco y en todo el norte de la República, adonde la gente es más democrática, más igualadora, más irónica y más ingenua, llaman sin ambajes *panteón* á un pedazo de tierra cubierto de cesped, recinto sin monte seco. Este lugar da entrada al tigre y al perro que van allí á celebrar ya uno, ya otro, su festín á espensas del reciente cadaver de un blanco, de un negro ó de un mulato, mas no por cierto de un semi-dios griego, ni de un hombre divinidad moderna!

A este paso algún buen día la palabra panteón sonará como una ofensa.

Los *a'hót* no solamente tienen el poder de entrar en las personas, de hechizarlas, y de encarnarse, permítaseme el neologismo, en ele-

mentos que acarrean el mal, como la tempestad, la viruela, la hambruna, etc. sino también son capaces de dar puñaladas y, más aún, flechazos.

Mas esto de la flecha parece que sólo lo hacen á pedido de los brujos, que en mataco se llaman *kayagüé*, *ippaya* en chiriguano: esto parece que es propio también del *gualicho* de los araucanos. los que de hecho tienen un verbo especial para expresar esta acción. á saber. *cùllin*: esto en mataco es *ioco*.

Se comprende que los hechiceros hayan elegido la flecha como arma que les estaba reservada por el espíritu del mal, desde que es la única entre las armas que usan los indios, que se presta al misterio y al engaño; porque, como es proyectil, puede descargarse de cualquier parte y desde lejos, quedando oculta la mano.

Los indios tienen mucha fé en este poder de sus *á'hot*. Un mi ladino, cierto Tajo, (se llamaba así porque tenía una cicatriz en la cara) indio, para probarme una vez el poder indudable de los *a'hót*, y lo ignorante que son los cristianos cuando niegan su existencia, me contó el siguiente caso:

«Sucedió que una tribu volvía de un ingenio de azúcar en la Provincia de Salta. Era tiempo de algarroba, y una noche la gente estaba de fiesta cantando y bailando. De repente advierten que venía un cristiano cantando, se oyen las pisadas del caballo y en seguida el ruido de las grandes espuelas de plata.

«Eso que llegó adonde estaba la gente hace alto y los reta por lo que estaban haciendo, queriéndoselo prohibir; á la gente no le gusta que el cristiano se entremeta y le dicen al *hayagüé* que lo haga salir de ahí. El *hayagüé* no habiéndolo podido conseguir de á buenas le dice al cristiano que insistia en estorbar y profanar la fiesta:

«—Ahora verás tú si somos gente que no servimos, y cuanto puede el *a'hót*.

«Se inclina, se tapa, y grita al *a'hot*.

«—Fléchalo al cristiano y hazle ver si es poco lo que valemos nosotros.

«—Está bien, responde el *a'hót*.

«En un instante se siente un rumor que sale de abajo como de un palo que se rompe.

«Era una flecha que se había clavado.

«De repente se cae el cristiano del caballo: había muerto.

«El *a'hót* lo había flechado, porque el cristiano no había querido creer que era *a'hót*.»

Toda la tribu juró haberlo presenciado.

Es curioso que el objeto, sino de una adoración, al menos de un reconocimiento, sea el principio del mal; porque al fin el *a'hót* no es

más que una potencia maléfica ó capaz para el mal. Si pretendemos considerar tal reconocimiento como la vislumbre de una religión, habrá que confesar entónces que la religión tiene por punto de partida el miedo al mal y el deseo de conjurarlo.

Y esto que se encuentra entre los indios del Chaco se encuentra también en las demás naciones salvajes de la América; si bien entre algunas, como en la América Septentrional, se han reconocido otras potencias ó seres invisibles benéficos que se han llamado *manitos* y *oquis* por algunos.

En cuanto á esto los americanos raciocinan ingenuamente, pero con agudeza: «¿á qué conduce preocuparse, dicen ellos, de un ser que por naturaleza es bueno? de seguro él no nos hará mal, porque si es bueno no puede quererlo.»—Lo mismo que diría un metafísico.

Hay que confesar que todas las religiones se resienten algo de éste, por así decirlo, pecado original: porque todas predican é imponen sacrificios expiatorios para aplacar la ira suprema.

Entre los indios del Chaco que conservan alguna tradición de la enseñanza de los misioneros, se acosumbra una ceremonia, acaso la única religiosa, que parodia una función cristiana. De tiempo en tiempó se reunen las mujeres de una parte, y los hombres de la otra, en torno de sus ancianos y caudillos. En el medio, sobre un montón de flores, ponen un *a'hót*, un niño que ha de ser brujo: y durante la cosa conversan, fuman, beben, hasta que se separan diciendo haber «*estado en misa*.» Los brujos no dejan de conversar con el Niño Dios, recibiendo, (1) responsos y comunicándolos á la tribu.

En esta como en las demás ceremonias el hechicero ó brujo siempre se inclina, se tapa, habla hácia la tierra, abajo de la cual están los *a'hót*, habla con voz natural y se responde con otra penetrante y ahuecada, que siempre se cambia según la naturaleza del *a'hot*, y la chusma cree que es el *a'hot* que contesta, sin darse cuenta que es un juego de ventrilocuismo.

He citado muchas veces á los hechiceros para decir que son los intermediarios entre los *ah'ót* y los hombres; pero ellos son también los médicos, como también son los sacerdotes; mas aún, son sacerdotes justamente porque son médicos.

La asociación de la religión con la medicina parece un hecho constante entre los pueblos primitivos y entre el vulgo de la civilización actual. Este hecho no deja de inspirar reflecciones histórico-filosóficas. Según los historiadores consta que existía ya entre las razas de América, y hasta Oviedo lo hace notar cuando se encuentra con aquel

(1) Esta función del «Niño Brujo» talvez sea costumbre indígena, porque algo parecido se encuentra entre los demás indios del Chaco. Ed.

hecho en la Española. Robertson, ese sóbrio y acertado historiador de la América, lo explica en pocas palabras cuando dice:—«La superstición en su forma primitiva nació de la impaciencia natural del hombre por libertarse de un mal presente y nó del temor á los males que lo esperaban en la vida venidera, de suerte que su origen fué ingerto de la medicina y nó de la religión.»

Entre estos indios no me consta que la superstición de ellos vaya unida á un rito cruel, ni tampoco he leido que otra cosa pueda decirse de los demás salvajes americanos.

El privilegio de la crueldad parece que es exclusivo de las religiones, entrándo entre ellas las primitivas del Perú y especialmente de México.

CAPÍTULO X

CULTO DE LOS SEPULCROS

Los indios tienen el culto de los sepulcros, y puede decirse que siempre lo han tenido.

Cerca de la ciudad de Santiago del Estero he visto los túmulos, y las tinajas que ellos contienen.

Estos túmulos se hallan sobre la orilla de una barranca del antiguo lecho del actual Río dulce. Las lluvias ó los trabajos de los hombres, con sus erosiones y excavaciones, ponen en descubierto á los vasos que en gran número se encuentran. Los hay de varias dimensiones y algunos que miden 60 centímetros de alto por 40 de ancho; los hay toscos, también lustrados y adornados con cordones entretejidos y con diseños de rayas dispuestas geométricamente. La pasta y los colores son buenos.

En estas tinajas, se colocaban las cenizas ó los huesos de los cadáveres. El terreno que está abajo de estas barrancas, de las que está dividido por sólo una ondulación, se halla cubierto de seculares algarrobos y de otras plantas propias de terreno de aluvión actual, esto es, de aluvión producido por ríos tales cuales se hallan existentes según la hidrografía actual. En los terrenos, ya de emersión, ya de aluvión, anteriores á la época actual, y que resultan de condiciones climatológicas é hidrográficas diferentes, como por ejemplo de la época glacial, se producen otras clases de plantas. Es esta una observación personal mía de la que tengo toda seguridad y que también ha sido materia de informes oficiales.

Ahora bien, no cabe duda que cuando se construyeron estos sepulcros, corría el rio al pie de la barranca, siendo esta circunstancia la

primera necesidad de la vida que se buscan tanto los salvajes, cuanto los hombres civilizados, en todo el mundo: y así como todo demuestra la considerable distancia de aquella época, se impone también la conclusión que aún en aquel entonces ya se tenía especial cuidado de los cadáveres.

En Calingasta, en la Cordillera de San Juan, se hallan sepulcros en forma de pozos cubiertos con una loza, pero que no están pircados porque el terreno es consistente. Al lado del cadáver se encuentran objetos, sobre todo una especie de gama y, según me parece también, el perro. En uno se descubrió un objeto en forma de abanico rígido de piedra pulimentada y que sin duda sería un espejo. Esto se acostumbraba también entre los Etruscos, y me acuerdo que en uno de estos sepulcros, en Sabana de la Maremma Toscana, el ingeniero V. Busatti encontró un espejo de plata, que yo ví, con un magnífico grabado, que representaba, si mal no recuerdo, la sentencia de París.

En otra parte de San Juan cerca de la sierra de Pié de Palo, al lado de un montón de piedras pintadas. (1) se halló un aposento mortuorio de los indios con muchos cadáveres.

En las montañas de Salta y en la Puna de Jujuy se encuentran sepulcros *(Huacas)* en forma de pequeños hornos de piedra con bóveda (2) parecidos á los que allá se usan por la gente de campo: en ellos suelen estar hasta tres cadáveres sentados en cuclillas envueltos ó cubiertos con ropajes, algunas veces con tinajas á la par que contienen objetos de oro y plata. En la actualidad los collas cristianos descenientes de aquellos indios que dependían del imperio del Perú y del Inca, hacen sus pesquizas en estos sepulcros y recogen los huesos para hacerles decir misa, como ellos dicen; mas la codicia de otros casi siempre les ha salido adelante, así que, aunque dan con los huesos, no encuentran los objetos preciosos con que fueron sepultados. No se distingue como era la ropa que vestían, porque ni bien los destapan, con el contacto del aire, todo se reduce á polvo.

Los Chiriguanos, en el Chaco de Bolivia, también acostumbran meter sus muertos adentro de un canjilón que entierran abajo del suelo del propio rancho. Así la casa de habitación lo es para los vivos y muertos, y, ora sea ello causa ó efecto, ora una y otra cosa juntas, lo cierto es que los Chiriguanos no son nómades. Ellos pintan con todo esmero los tales canjilones de los que la calidad y adorno están en proporción al caudal de la familia. Los canjilones son quemados, y el embarnizado, dado con un betún rojo de mal olor, se pone en

(1) Voz local que se aplica á los petroglifos. Ed.
(2) Llámanse también trojes.

crudo ó en cocido, saliendo más brillante y más claro en el primer caso, más oscuro en el segundo.

Sobre la cubierta del canjilón enterrado conservan ellos fuegos encendidos por todo un mes: á no dudarlo, si realmente es cierta esta práctica, lo hacen para destruir los gases pernicíosos que se desprenden durante la descomposición del cuerpo.

Los Chiriguanos pobres, que carecen de canjilones, entierran los cadáveres en fosa adentro del rancho y lo abandonan hasta que haya cesada el mal olor.

Los cuerpos de los ajusticiados por causa de repetidos homicidios son arrojados al campo ó quemados.

Algunos Indios, y entre ellos los Chirionoses, (1) que viven sobre las fronteras de Bolivia ó del Brasíl, entierran sus muertos dentro de los árboles. Para ello van á lo más enmarañado del bosque, eligen el yuchán, cuyo tronco, en forma de canjilón, es blando como corcho, lo derriban y en él colocan el cadáver tapándolo convenientemente para que los cuervos no lo devoren ni lo destruyan. Al abrir el camino del fuerte Sarmiento poco ha, se encontró por casualidad uno de estos sepulcros.

Entre los matacos se acostumbra enterrar los muertos, y en algunas tribus, las del este, que confinan con los Tobas, los queman: costumbre ésta que por analogía deberíamos suponer la tuviesen en común con los tobas.

Las ideas que inspiran á los Matacos en las ceremonias del sepelio deberíamos creer las tengan también los otros Indios salvajes con quienes están en continua relación de guerra, sea como aliados, sea como enemigos, y con quienes tienen en común el culto de los espíritus.

Ahora los Matacos, como ya se dijo, creen que el alma del muerto no tiene descanso mientras no sea sepultado el cuerpo en el territorio de la tribu. No me consta que se haga excepción de los que mueren en la guerra. Creen también que el alma, que ellos llaman *hésék* (dan el nombre de *tzan* al cuerpo y de *hót* al muerto) no desciende bajo de tierra, á estar con sus compañeros, siempre que antes el cuerpo no haya pasado por la descomposición, sea del fuego ó del aire. Dicen que mientras esto no suceda, el alma anda vagando alrededor del rancho de la familia apareciéndose y lamentándose.

Estas apariciones de las almas y sus lamentos sirven de materia para muchas patrañas entre ellos, casi no conversan de otra cosa, y apostaría yo que deben ser causa de tanto espanto entre ellos como entre nosotros.

(1) Tribus de raza chiriguana. Ed.

Se sigue que aún cuando un individuo haya muerto fuera del territorio van los parientes y los habitantes de la toldería á buscar sus restos para reimpatriarlos y darles sepultura: mas como eso de arrastrar un cadáver sería cosa algo más que seria para gente que marcha á pie, y que muchas veces tiene que andar centenares de kilómetros, por lo tanto esperan á que el cadáver haya perdido las carnes y en ese estado trasportan los huesos. Con esto en nada perjudican al finado, porque su alma no descenderá abajo de la tierra mientras no haya terminado la descomposición.

Cuando sobreviene la muerte, si es de mañana, en esa misma tarde, y si es de noche, en la mañana siguiente, colocan el cadáver adentro de un hoyo: mas no lo tapan, únicamente le echan ramas por encima á fin de que no pueda servir de pasto á los tigres, á los perros, ni á las aves de rapiña. Concluida la descomposición, ó lo queman como he dicho, ó lo tapan con tierra definitivamente.

Cuando el individuo muere afuera lejos, entonces lo envuelven en una red en cuclillas y lo colocan sobre un árbol, tapándolo convenientemente para librarlo de los peligros enunciados; al año, ó antes si se ofrece, pero siempre cuando ya no queda más que los huesos, vuelven á recogerlo y lo conducen al rancho donde le dan la sepultura anhelada.

Sea donde se fuere que coloquen el cadáver le ponen siempre al lado una tinaja llena de agua. La razón de esto está en que ni bien muere el individuo, ya están allí los otros finados de visita; y que podría darles sed á ellos y á él también; y es por esto que les ponen con que satisfacerla. El que sepa lo que el agua vale en esta región comprenderá el valor que se da á este elemento en favor de los finados; y de la explicación deducirá el espíritu hospitalario y fraternal que se conserva aun allende la misma tumba. Por otra parte creencias y prácticas parecidas corrían entre nuestros antiguos padres paganos.

Los indios del Chaco como son pobres y andan desnudos, no pueden aprovechar la muerte de sus amados para lucirse con ricos ropajes negros, como los cristianos, ó con telas blancas como los chinos, pero manifiestan su luto á su modo, rapándose la cabeza, única parte que tienen cubierta. Las mujeres, en lugar de andar ostentando su duelo por los templos y las plazas, se esconden adentro de sus toldos evitando todo contacto con sus semejantes; se mantienen estudiosamente mudas, y se dedican con mayor empeño á sus quehaceres domésticos. Por un año perseveran en este luto, durante el cual es impropio volverse á casar; toman siempre los senderos apartados, cuando se ven obligadas á salir, y si uno las encuentra se tapan el rostro: por nada quieren hablar y rehuyen la ocasión. Ha sucedido que viajeros

que se han encontrado por casualidad con mujeres así urañas y mudas, por sendas sospechosas, las han maltratado, y hasta les han dado muerte porque ignoraban la tal costumbre.

A más de eso de raparse acostumbran el llanto, que es una cantinela monótona y sin expresión; á lo que parece es convencional y se acompaña al son del *pin-pin* que es, como creo haberlo dicho ya, un mortero elaborado de un tronco con un instrumento ó con fuego; tiene agua adentro y lo tapan con unas pieles estiradas como si fuese un tambor. Sobre esta piel dan de golpes con un mate vacío en el cual han introducido granos de maiz ó pepitas de algarroba.

El llanto en común lo hacen á horas señaladas, pero la viuda, ó la madre, llora sin cesar, y aún hasta cuando anda por las calles en sus ocupaciones. Los parientes y amigos acompañan al muerto á la sepultura, y si es un cacique querido, ó algún hechicero de fama, va toda la tribu.

Los caciques y sobre todo los hechiceros famosos ocupan siempre un buen lugar entre los *a'hót* que los esperan, entre los cuales será tanto mayor su influencia cuanto mayor haya sido la consideración de que hayan gozado entre sus vecinos, comprobada en el acto de los funerales. Y cuando muere alguno de ellos, los indios reunidos al rededor de su féretro le ruegan que allá lejos entre los *a'hot* se empeñe porque el *a'hót* de la tormenta y el de la peste, ó el otro de la hambruna quieran perdonar á sus toldos y visitar á los de sus enemigos. El moribundo se lo promete y en recompensa sus compañeros hacen honor á sus funerales y aumentan con lo mismo la autoridad benéfica del finado allá adonde está el *a'hót*. ¿Qué más rogamos nosotros á los nuestros que mueren en olor de santidad, sino que se hagan intercesores allá en el cielo en pro de nosotros peregrinos en este valle de lágrimas?

El dolor hace unos á todos los hombres, y la armonía del carácter humano en sus actos y en sus dichos, en sus esperanzas y en sus recelos, nunca se manifiesta de una manera más relevante en todo el mundo que delante de los sepulcros.

CAPITULO XI

LOS MÉDICOS

Allá en el Chaco hay médicos y médicas, pero muy pocas medicinas; la curación es del todo empírica por la ignorancia y superstición de aquellos indígenas

Es de extrañar que en el Chaco los habitantes salvajes no hayan descubierto remedios, pero ello es así, debido en parte á la escasez de su inteligencia, pero más que todo á la superstición de ellos por lo que respecta á las enfermedades.

De hecho ellos creen que una enfermedad es causada por un *a'hót* que se mete dentro de la persona; por lo tanto sólo se trata de cazarlo con el único artificio que cabe, el de los conjuros.

De ello se sigue que los médicos no pueden ser otra cosa que sus brujos ó sacerdotes, ó como se les quiera llamar. Aparte de esto la misma superstición de ellos es la consecuencia de la necesidad que cada persona experimenta de librarse de un mal presente, y de su ignorancia acerca del mejor modo de conseguirlo. Esa buena dósis de malicia innata en el hombre sirve de medio entre la ignorancia y la superstición.

Sin embargo ellos se dan cuenta de la falta de remedios eficaces, y de la superioridad que en esto tienen los cristianos, en quienes tienen mucha fé como curanderos; mientras que á su vez la plebe cristiana la tiene, y mucha, en los hechizeros de aquellos.

Me consta que estancieros ricos han llamado á indios para que los curen.

Pues bien los brujos curan á los enfermos conjurando los *a'hót* con gritos, con saltos, con soplar y escupir en la boca del paciente. Acompañan también estos conjuros con algunas prescripciones homeopáticas, como ser dieta, baños y no sé si no con masage también.

La fé de ellos en los conjuros no descaece ni aún en presencia de remedios de los cristianos.

Sucedió una vez mientras estaba abordo, que varamos por falta de agua, y habiéndonos rodeado los indios, se presentó una comitiva con un enfermo que venía á hacerse curar. Faltábanos el lenguaráz aquel día, mas yo sacando partido de los apuntes míos vine á comprender que el indio había sido picado por una víbora:—*Chiasquietáj—Klá*—«remedio para las víboras» era lo que decían.

Teníamos un botiquín y nos apresurábamos á curarlo con amoniaco. Para nosotros era de suma importancia salir bien, porque así nos haríamos de prestigio, y de amigos, entre estos indios, que pocos días antes en una emboscada nos habían hecho una descarga á quema ropa.

La mejoría empero marchaba con mucha lentitud, y hubo momento en los primeros tres días, período supersticiosamente crítico, en que tuvimos serios temores; porque la hinchazón se iba extendiendo hasta la ingle y la barriga, y si hubiese alcanzado hasta la región del corazón hubiese sido asunto concluido para el doliente.

Pues bien, durante la curación, que la hicimos como en cuerpo de

caballo, y por cierto que el caso no era como para andar con chicas, el enfermo no tomó más que agua por prescripción de sus brujos, y después, durante la noche, mientras toda la tripulación dormía, empezaban los médicos á cantar *húu húu húu* . . . . *hée hée hée* . . . . *hii hii hii* . . . . y volvían á principiar *húu húu húu*, etc; después, de vez en cuando, á escupir y á soplar como fuelles sobre la herida y sobre las demás partes del cuerpo, y así se estaban horas enteras.

Yo que velaba hasta altas horas de la noche, tanto por tomar mi turno de guardia, como por aprovechar algunas horas de estudio sin interrupción, solía acercarme á ellos; al principio callaban, mas después, animados con mis *hiss tzilataj*—«bien lindo», y al ver que no me burlaba de ellos, seguían no más sin que les estorbase mi presencia.

Por fin, al cabo de veinte días sanó el enfermo.

Un modo raro de curar es aquel que tienen para la herida del peje-raya, la cual duele mucho y á veces hasta es mortal. Esta curación consiste en sobreponer la parte ofendida, que suele ser el tobillo, sobre el humo que sale de las rajas encendidas del *palo santo*, leña que es muy resinosa, después de lo cual debe cabalgar sobre la herida una mujer que esté con el mes. Se me ha asegurado por cristianos que han hecho la experiencia, que es un remedio de lo más eficaz.

Toda curación sin embargo necesita, para que tenga su virtud, que esté en manos de un hechicero, ó cuando menos de una hechicera.

Cualquiera no puede ser hechicero, y así como se hacen pagar las curaciones según la gravedad de la dolencia y la calidad de la persona, ya sea con pieles, ya con animales, ya con víveres, ya con otros objetos, así también esta profesión da lugar á camorras y á engaños. A más de esto, para captarse prestigio, se hacen preceder del misterio y de lo sobrenatural. Así en la toldería de Granadero, los indios contaban de un jovencito, embarcado ya en esta carrera, que cuando muchacho desapareció y volvió á aparecer después de dos años que pasó abajo de tierra entre los *a'hot*: éstos se lo habían levantado para instruirlo en el arte é inocularle la virtud de médico y de sacerdote.

A propósito de estos engaños, una vez casi me fué mal. Fué á visitar al cacique Granadero que recién convalecía de una larga enfermedad. Llevaba conmigo, como siempre, un tintero de bolsillo y una pluma. Granadero se fijó en estas cosas y me preguntó lo que eran. Yo creyendo darle con el gusto dispongo pluma y tintero y hago ademán de escribir, mas en aquel momento veo que Granadero se pone furioso y amenazador: sus médicos acababan de sanarlo del *a'hot* que tanto tiempo le había atormentado, extrayéndole del cuerpo plumas y lapiz en cuya forma, á más no poder cristiana, decían que le había «hecho daño» el *a'hót*.

Incontrastable parece que es la habilidad que tienen las mujeres como parteras.

Con singular habilidad esperan la crisis del parto, y entónces levantan y sostienen á la parturienta sacudiéndola y acompañando el acto con los acostumbrados conjuros hasta obtener el éxito.

Para asistir empero, á un espectáculo interesante, hay que ver una curación en medio de una toldería.

Una noche que estaba yo acampado cerca de una tribu, entré en curiosidad al oir un gran ruido de voces y la repercusión de grandes golpes en la tierra. Aprovechándome de la buena relación en que estaba con ellos, no trepidé en ir á ver lo que había. En el medio de la toldería, en una especie de plazoleta, ví un círculo de figuras negras alumbradas acá y allá por la luz de las fogatas; eran las chinas y los hombres sentados en cuclillas que fumaban en silencio. En medio del círculo corrían arriba y abajo, en un espacio como de ocho metros, cuatro hombres robustos, con plumas de avestruz y sonajas en los tobillos, en las muñecas, en la cabeza y en la cintura; con las manos levantadas y haciendo mil ademanes, movían unos matecillos á medio llenar con pepitas que aumentaban el bullicio. Corrían cantando y aullando; estaban jadeantes y sudados; estirando las piernas batían el suelo fuertemente con toda la planta del pie, y en ese momento alzaban la voz de una manera loca y desesperante, con los brazos elevados, la cabeza inclinada y encorvado el cuerpo.

Alternativamente dos de ellos se paraban, se acurrucaban, meneando rápidamente la cabeza á diestra y siniestra, arriba y abajo, aullaban, soplaban y escupían sobre la espalda, piernas, cabeza y en la boca de dos enfermos que estaban sentados en medio de ellos.

Los dos enfermos sufrían atrozmente por los *a'hót* que se les habían metido en forma de dolores reumáticos: los hechiceros pretendían sacárselos con aquella danza infernal. No conseguirán su propósito mientras no logren, con su carrera desenfrenada y sus golpes, cansar é intimidar á los *a'hót*, que con mala intención y al propio tiempo, bailan la misma danza precisamente abajo de donde ellos están, é interceptarles con el ruido que hacen la comunicación con los *a'hót* de la enfermedad. El que más salta, aulla y bate con los pies es el mejor médico.

El público que los rodeaba estaba allí para dar realce y mayor virtud á la curación, pero no sin su cierto recelo de que el *a'hót*, al salir del cuerpo del doliente, se le antojase colarse en el de alguno de los presentes.

Esta escena me convence que entre los indios, los médicos se ganan su pan con el sudor de.... todo el cuerpo; que también entre ellos, los embaucadores, á fuerza de embaucar á los demás, conclu-

yen por engañarse á sí mismos; y que la chusma estaba verdaderamente persuadida de la verdad y eficacia de los conjuros.

Y estaba por sonreirme, movido de desprecio y compasión, pero me acordé que *c'était tout comme chez nous*, y.... la sonrisa murió antes de nacer.

CAPÍTULO XII

ESTADO SOCIAL

Estos indios no distinguen las estaciones del año sino por las cosechas que en ellos se hacen: así hablan de la época de la algarroba, etc.

¿Cómo podrían empezar á dividir el año ó en meses ó en lunas, si sólo cuentan hasta cuatro? Esto mismo nos garante *a priori* que no se han preocupado en establecer las reglas del movimiento de la tierra ó del sol, para mejor decir, según ellos.

Esto no obstante, es cosa curiosa como dividen el día en un sinnúmero de partes, según la altura del sol, las que hacen las veces de nuestras horas. Ellos también distinguen varias constelaciones, como ser las Cabrillas, Venus, la Vía Lactea, el Centauro.

Con todo no tienen palabra que diga año. Los Matacos usan una, *c-lüppe*, que quiere decir época, y que tiene el mismo significado de período indeterminado, como entre nosotros. En lugar de «día», dicen «sol» *(i-qué-la)*, y por «mes», «luna» *(i-güe lacq)*. En esto se ajustan al lenguaje de todas las naciones, como que entre nosotros todavía se conserva con este sentido en el uso poético, mientras en la lengua vulgar ha sufrido con el tiempo tales trasformaciones que hace aparecer á las palabras relativas como independientes de su primitivo significado material del sol y de la luna.

Ya sea que hagan á la luna semejante á una luz, ya, lo que es más prabable, la luz semejante á una luna, el hecho es que el nombre que dan á la luna y á una luz es el mismo.

Lo propio no se dice del fuego, á que deben atribuir una virtud especial; porque los Chiriguanos condenan á ser quemados los cadáveres de los que mueren en olor, ó más bien, en sabor de malos; y los Tobas y una parte de los Matacos, los cadáveres de cualesquiera. Esta última práctica puede explicarse por el deseo de realizar á la brevedad posible la condición que favorece al finado, esto es, que tan luego como se consuman las carnes, pueda el alma descender tierra abajo á estar con las compañeras.

Apesar de que no conocen ni el fósforo, ni el azufre y, no digo el eslabón, no tienen ni siquiera el pedernal, sin embargo sacan fuego cuando quieren. Ya dije como lo sacan haciendo girar rápidamente un palo sobre otro puesto de plano, hasta que el aserrín que resulta, y que parece polvo de café tostado, se enciende; entónces amontonan leña muy combustible, soplan y hacen llamear, y después si quieren producen el incendio. Uno de los palos de que se sirven, es de la chilca, arbusto aromático, resinoso y poroso, que se encuentra en abundancia en todas partes de la República.

Se acostumbra decir que cada indio se lo hace todo, y á ello se atribuye la lentitud y retardo en sus acciones. Y sin embargo, no es así. Podrán ser errantes, no por eso dejan de repartirse la labor. Entre ellos hay armeros, constructores de canoas, fabricantes de redes. tejedores, etc.; éstos venden sus artefactos á los compañeros y reciben en cambio otros objetos. Tienen, pues, sus gremios de artes y oficios; pero en embrión, se entiende. Y tienen también palabras propias para expresarlo; y entre los Matacos, se forman de la voz que expresa el objeto y de una partícula que indica la función. De estas partículas *'hi* indica posesión, depósito; *guú* indica hechura, fabricante; *kiá* es remedio, esto es, lo que sirve para procurarse algo; por ejemplo: pescado, *yacq-set;* pescador, *yacq-set-quiá;* flecha, *lutèk;* fabricante de flechas. *lutek-guú;* dueño de flechas. *lutek-'hi.* En virtud de esta misma partícula, la primera vez que vieron un baul y una jaula los llamaron y los llaman *imai-hi*, esto es, guarda-ropa; *kuentié-hi*, esto es, guarda-pájaros.

Una de las industrias más adelantadas es la de tejer, para la que como ya he dicho, no usan la lanzadera, sino una pala como de palmo con la que comprimen la trama á mano; otra industria es la de hacer redes que suelen tener hasta 15 y 20 metros de largo. De todo lo que tienen nada supera á las bolsas, por la elegancia y elasticidad con que son hechas, cuyas mallas son como los rizos de la cabellera y tan elásticas que, según el contenido, una pequeña bolsa puede adquirir un tamaño extraordinario sin perder el ajuste necesario para que los objetos no se pierdan. Acostumbran adornarlas con dibujos, pero ellos son todos geométricos, como ser, rayas paralelas, triángulos y cuadros.

Merece una especial mención el arte de hacer canoas, que se forman de un sólo trozo del tronco corpulento y acorchado del yuchan, que excavan toscamente y después lo lanzan al agua.

La herramienta que aquellos salvajes emplean son las conchas de una clase de ostra grande, ó sea almeja, que abunda en las lagunas del Chaco: también usan los dientes del tigre, maderas duras y mandíbulas de pescados, como ser, los de la palometa, con que se afeitan también la cabellera y la poca barba que tienen.

No sólo no ignoran la cerámica, sino que es entre sus artes aquella en que son menos inferiores comparados con nosotros.

La cocina debe haber contribuido mucho en los descubrimientos de esta industria; pero su piedad por los muertos es la que ha determinado el desarrollo y progreso relativo. Cabalmente los Matacos, los Tobas, los Chunupis y otros, que no entierran sus muertos en tinajas, tienen ollas toscas y sin pulimentación para la cocina, mientras que aquellos que vivían en Santiago y los Chiriguanos en Bolivia, si bien tienen vasos como botijas, tienen otros muy bien pulimentados, pintados y adornados con piquillos: y es en los más grandes y más hermosos que depositan los cadáveres.

Las tinajas para el agua tienen siempre una cintura en la panza, que sirve para recibir la soga con que las sostienen, haciéndola pasar por la frente: de esta manera las cargan á cuestas, encorvando para el efecto cuello y espaldas. Este modo de cargar está bien distante de remedar la gracia de la tinaja sobre la cabeza como las llevan nuestras campesinas; y más bien hace parecer á las tales chinas como si fuesen bestias de carga; pero puede ser que sea un modo más higiénico: en todo caso es más práctico en esos senderos á través de bosques enmarañados.

Ni conocen, ni acostumbran la agricultura; sin embargo, algunas veces siembran maíz (que se sabe es originario de América), y también zapallos. Cuando creen que ha llegado el tiempo de comerse la cosecha, van y la recogen. No muelen el maíz, pero á éste y á los zapallos los comen hervidos y asados mientras están verdes: una cosecha por lo tanto, se hace de á pocos y dura algún tiempo. Para sembrar se valen de una pala de madera dura en forma como de un remo chico, ó de una punta grande de lanza; el hombre abre la tierra, la china mete la simiente, la tapa, y abur. La siembra se hace en un campo quemado y húmedo, es decir, que le ha llovido poco antes.

La cosecha es común de todos, pero la mezquinan á los de afuera. Cuando estábamos á bordo, habiéndosenos concluido casi todos los víveres, hambrientos de provisiones frescas y verduras, porque hacía más de tres meses que no las conseguíamos, recibimos con gran regocijo un regalo de choclos y zapallos que nos hicieron algunos indios amigos, amigos empero, que más tarde nos mataron al lenguaraz. Los marineros pudieron descubrir donde estaba el zapallar y la chacra, y fueron á escondidas á robarlos. Ahora bien, al día siguiente cuando volvieron para repetir la cosa, encontraron chacra y zapallos destruidos y segados sin dejar una sola mata, todo que ya no servía para nada. De los indios no pudimos dar con uno.

Por lo demás, parece que los cristianos no quieren que los indios se dediquen á la agricultura. Se me aseguró que habiendo aquellos

encontrado campos sembrados por indios amigos de esa frontera, destruyeron toda la labranza, y que desde aquel entónces los indios de allí no han vuelto á cultivar un palmo de tierra. Esta intención responde al interés que tienen de impedir que los indios tomen posesión (reconocida ahora también como legítima por las leyes argentinas) de los excelentes terrenos que los cristianos limítrofes ó vecinos codician como buena presa para el porvenir.

No acostumbran el comercio; y ¿cómo podrían acostumbrarlo sin agricultura y sin industrias, siendo todos andariegos y nómades? Sin embargo acostumbran en pequeña escala el cambio, única forma primitiva de un comercio embrionario: tampoco poseen las palabras correspondientes á «vender y comprar»; y para expresar esta idea se diría que hubiesen ido á la escuela de un economista para aprender aquel «*do ut des*», la formula del cambio; porque á la verdad los Matacos, por ejemplo, por decir «vendeme» dicen *atquiocq niquiocq* esto es, «dame te doy».

De esto se comprende que no tienen moneda; pero ellos se han formado la palabra para nombrar la nuestra después de vista; ella es entre los Matacos *tdócq-kynat*, que quiere decir, cuero ó piel de metal, *kynat* es la palabra genérica que expresa cualquier metal que no existe ni circula en toda la extensión del Chaco. De aquí se vé también que ella es palabra anterior al papel moneda.

Sin embargo una especie de moneda, aunque no sea más que en embrión, poseen los habitantes del Chaco, y es una materia para embijarse, que es muy apreciada por ellos aún en pequeñísima cantidad. En Santa Cruz de la Sierra llaman *urucú* á la planta que la dá, y se obtiene la sustancia que produce haciéndo hervir el fruto por veinte y cuatro horas: este larga á la superficie la materia colorante, que se recoge y reduce á pelotillas de diferentes tamaños. El color lo da la cáscara del fruto, que es del tamaño de una naranja; la cáscara negrusca dá el color negro, la amarilla el naranjado, el rojo, y la blanca el verde; éstas dos últimas son del grueso de una cáscara de nuez. Cada una de las tres se produce en una diversa especie de *urucú*, que son plantas del alto de un hombre, con fruta del tamaño de una granada, y que se abre de por sí cuando está madura.

Esta sustancia aunque producida y preparada en Bolivia, circula entre todos los indios del Chaco; les sirve para teñirse de rojo cuando enamoran, de negro cuando espantan, y de verde para engalanarse: colores son éstos que se borran con la mayor facilidad.

A propósito de adornos, éstos indios acostumbran más ó menos el tatuaje, el que he visto muy desarrollado en algunos guerreros Tobas, y especialmente en las mujeres. Parecen picadura de viruela y está dispuesto en forma geométrica. Se lo hacen punzando la piel con una

espina gruesa bañada en una sustancia cáustica que parece leche, que deja una impresión indeleble y queda inyectada en el tejido epidérmico. Esta sustancia la hallan principalmente en Bolivia, en Santa Cruz, y se llama en Guaraní *iguoqui*; el mismo nombre dan también á la planta: es una enredadera y forma racimos que dan flores blancas y fruta con punta redonda, y cuando ésta revienta le cae un polvo. Para obtener el *iguoqui* cortan el racimo antes que madure, y del tallo brota la leche con que inoculan: durante la operación conservan el tallo adentro de agua para que no se derrame la leche. Un Chiriguano vió una de estas plantas á 20 leguas más abajo de la frontera cristiana, sobre el río Bermejo, en el lugar llamado «La Luna Nueva».

Una costumbre, hermana de padre y madre del tatuaje, por lo que respecta al objeto que se proponen, es la extirpación del vello, que es universal entre los habitantes del Chaco, y acaso también entre todos los indios del Nuevo Mundo.

Su objeto es el parecer bien, pero posible es que la verdadera causa tenga que ver con la higiene y comodidad.

Talvez quieran también distinguirse de esta manera de los demás animales que son velludos.

Mientras tanto, ó porque lo sean de orígen, ó más bien porque sea efecto de esa selección gradual consiguiente á tal costumbre, lo cierto es que los indios carecen casi por completo de vello en el cuerpo y en la cara, y lo poco que les sale lo arrancan de buen grado con muy pocas excepciones.

No obstante que su lengua es tan completa no he podido descubrir ni cánticos ni cosa musical que se le parezca. Unicamente pude distinguir entre los Matacos esta tentativa de poesía cantada. Dios sabe como, por las chinas, pero á pesar de todo, revela el uso de la rima:

«Boníca nambonica
«Se-lé-ctié-nó:
«Boníca, boníca;
«Nambonica, nambonica,»

que quiere decir:—Me gusta, no me gusta que me abraces: me gusta, me gusta, no me gusta, no me gusta.

No tienen bailes, porque no merecen tal nombre esas carreras desenfrenadas en círculo que hacen tomándose unos á otros de la mano. Son empero honestos en su modo de bailar, y si llegan á juntarse hombres y mujeres, cada sexo forma su círculo aparte, uno adentro del otro; pero no se tocan.

En una palabra todo lo que es imaginación ó deba llamarse religión, poesía ó cancan, puede decirse que falta por completo entre estos salvajes.

CAPITULO XIII

ESTADO SOCIAL

(Continuación)

¿Pero, si no tienen imaginación no tendrían tampoco corazón? Se ha dicho y escrito repetidamente que los vínculos del parentesco son poco estrechos y menos tenaces entre los indios; y se ha pretendido deducir este hecho, no tanto de la observación, como del raciocinio, basándolo en la falta de familia y existencia del concubinato.

Temo que se va demasiado lejos. Acostumbrados nosotros á nuestra tradición cristiana, que, entre paréntesis sea dicho, es la excepción á la inmensa mayoría de las demás, excepción que se paga en parte con la perfidia disimulada de la infidelidad, y con la inmoralidad desfachatada de la prostitución.

Nos parece que si una mujer no está unida al hombre por todos los sacramentos de la Iglesia y si no es única, tiene que resultar la atrofia de todo sentimiento gentil.

Podría demostrarse también lo contrario; pero, para no salir del límite de estos mis Indios, he visto pruebas de gran ternura conyugal entre los polígamos.

Teníamos abordo un Indio con su joven y bella compañera, y éste la cuidaba y adoraba como á una virgen.

Con el Indio aquel que fué picado por una víbora, á quien curamos, en el acto acudió á él su esposa y lo siguió curando durante 20 días sin movérsele del lado.

El cacique Pascual á quien en una sorpresa le arrebataron la mujer, vieja ya y fea, preparó una invasión, corrió siguiendo el rastro, se batió como un león y rescató su compañera de manos de los enemigos. Y éstos son hechos acaecidos á vista y paciencia mía en un corto tiempo.

Cuando un indio se presenta ó pide algo, jamás olvida á sus hijos, á su mujer, á sus parientes: cuando recibe alguna cosa capaz de ser dividida la reparte, no sólo entre éstos, sino también entre sus compañeros.

He visto que las madres son siempre amorosísimas para con sus chicos; y he notado que las guerras entre las tribus y la matanza de los habitantes de la misma toldería, tienen siempre por móvil la venganza de ofensas inferidas á compatriotas ó parientes. Y si esto no es cariño ¿adónde buscaremos mayor?

Son crueles; pero es con prisioneros de guerra que condenan á muerte. Esta crueldad empero no se la podemos echar en cara nosotros que la acostumbrábamos hasta ayer si se quiere; que la poníamos en práctica en escala mayor contra los mismos Indios en la época de la conquista; y que la acostumbramos hasta el día de hoy contra los mismos cuando lo podemos hacer á mansalva.

Entre los indios esta costumbre de matar á los prisioneros es una necesidad para la seguridad personal en la vida nómade que llevan, expuesta á contínuas sorpresas; aparte de esto los libra de la vergüenza de la esclavitud, desconocida para ellos. (1) Bajo otro punto de vista eso es uno de los hechos de la mayor trascendencia para la ubicación de las razas, mediante lo cual la vencedora, sea por la fuerza, sea por la inteligencia, se sustituye por completo á la vencida, dando así lugar á los efectos de aquel procedimiento por selección, que es la base científica de la teoría darwiniana, á que se debe el mejoramiento gradual de las razas en todo el reino orgánico, para las cuales toda la lucha por la vida puede concretarse en la expresión *mors tua vita mea*.

Se ha dicho de los Indios americanos que se han vengado de la conquista y de la viruela que les importamos, con regalar á los europeos el mal venereo.

Creo que esta es una de aquellas afirmaciones que suelen hacerse sin prueba suficiente, y que se desmienten con facilidad. Se me ha dicho que los estudios de los sabios hacen remontar esta plaga históricamente á los tiempos más remotos. La opinión popular (á menudo errónea) ya de hecho la bautizó de Francia: y los historiadores la atribuyen con toda seriedad á la época de la invasión de Italia por Carlos VIII. El que guste seguir esta pista que vea el capítulo XV del Levítico.

Mientras tanto entre estos indios del Chaco no se conoce tal enfermedad, ó no se conocía antes de ser introducida por los cristianos. Y aunque ello podría explicarse con decir que una peste desaparece ó se atenúa después de cosechadas las víctimas con predisposición á ella, que es la teoría científica sostenida hoy por la nueva escuela médica, y que por fin de cuenta, me parece que se ajusta á la Teoría Darwiniana de la selección, con todo el hecho es como yo lo refiero. Hay otro más, y es, que en esos lugares donde la peste existe no perdona á los indios, mientras que, ó perdona ó ataca con menos intensidad al negro de Africa, como le consta á todo gaucho de la cam-

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(1) Esto no está de acuerdo con lo que se cuenta de los Mbayas y otras tribus, que según ello tienen esclavos. Ed.

paña, en todo lugar donde estas diferentes razas con su presencia se han prestado á la observación: esto lo apunto yo aquí para que le sirva á los que por acaso no se hayan fijado en ello ó lo ignoren.

Estos Indios son nómades, ya se sabe, pero no basta: ellos no acostumbran tener animales domésticos; los pocos que tienen de los nuestros es una excepción que confirma la regla.

Ya en tiempo de la conquista se sorprendieron aquellos hombres de la falta de animales domésticos entre los Indios, y la repetición del hecho en todo el continente dió á la cosa un carácter tal que ha llamado la atención de los historiadores y filósofos, desde Robertson hasta Humboldt, y de este al más modesto de los viajeros.

Efectivamente, el nomadismo ha existido y existe aún en Asia, sin embargo allá hubo y hay animales domésticos, como el caballo y el camello. ¿Los Lapones, los Samoyedos, Chutchis y los Peninsulares de Kamskatkia, en las regiones árticas, no han amansado aquellos el rengífero, y éstos el perro que uncen á sus trineos?

¿A qué, pues, atribuir esta indudable inferioridad de los nómades americanos? Por cierto que no á la incapacidad de la raza, como á primera vista podría parecer lo más simple y oportuno; porque en tal caso los Groenlandeses no debieron tener animales domésticos, como no los tenían los Esquimales de América, con ser que son de la misma raza, y se halla entre ellos, en la región polar, el bisonte, que es algo parecido al buey nuestro, y se domestica.

Por otra parte, lo de amansar algunos animales, que á ello se prestan, no presenta á fé una dificultad tal que exija del hombre una elevada capacidad; mientras que algo parecido no puede negárseles á estos nómades; porque la verdad es que los del Chaco siempre han tenido y tienen ya un avestruz, ya una chuña, ya una charata ó gallina del monte, y sabemos que entre ellos se encontró domesticado el perro mudo.

Yo pienso que este hecho, de la falta de animales domésticos, se debe á tres circunstancias especiales de este continente y de sus habitantes, que son: las condiciones físicas, las sociales y la escasez, cuando no la falta total, ó casi, de animales domesticables.

Se sabe que en este continente, por causas físicas fáciles de explicar, el frío, en igualdad de latitud geográfica, es mucho más intenso que en el viejo mundo, así que la zona templada es mucho más reducida aquí que allá. Por esto es que debe haber sido mucho más difícil el cuidado y más escasos los medios para la alimentación de los animales domésticos allá entre los habitantes de la parte fría de la América Septentrional donde se halla el bisonte.

Ya sin esto, el estado social de los nómades americanos hacía y hace casi imposible la conservación de los animales domésticos. En

efecto, no obstante que algunas veces una misma nación ocupó ó había ocupado inmensas regiones, sin embargo, ella se hallaba dividida en pequeñas tribus á que pertenecían territorios relativamente pequeños y que no por eso dejaban de estar, como lo están los sobrevivientes, en continua guerra entre sí. De ello se sigue, que allí no había seguridad, condición indispensable para la crianza de los animales y de cualquier otra pacífica labor. Hoy mismo, los Indios del Chaco, si bien conocen nuestros animales domésticos, á veces hacen la tentativa de criarlos, no por eso lo hacen en escala que merezca la pena: porque el mero hecho de tenerlos es ya una tentación para que el vecino los invada ó los despoje. Si la vida social hubiese existido ó hubiese alcanzado al punto de obligar á estos indios á reunirse en grandes agrupamientos, en tal caso, dada la extensión de sus vastos territorios, no obstante el ser nómades y hallarse en guerras continuas, les hubiese sido siempre fácil poner á salvo sus animales, en caso de ser invadidos, por medio de la internación.

¿Serían antropófagos los indios de esta parte? Es curiosidad que se despierta en todos nosotros al tratar de salvajes como éstos.

En América la antropofagía ha tenido adeptos entre «hebreos y samaritanos», entre «bárbaros y civilizados». Los salvajes caribes y los cultos mejicanos colmaban los mejores platos de su cocina con carne humana. Los mansos puruanos no desdeñaban el guiso de sangre humana para sus pascuas, en las que amasaban el pan de maíz con la sangre extraída de las frentes de las criaturas: piadosas carniceras eran las gentiles y bellas religiosas de aquella nación.

En esta parte del Chaco, aunque se haya acostumbrado, *temporibus illis*; cosa que no se puede asegurar, la antropofagía, hoy por hoy, ó no existe, ó se debe considerar reducida á su mínima expresión.

Nada digo de la costumbre de beber aloja en la cabellera desollada del cráneo de un prisionero y convertida en copa propiciadora de venganza y victoria.

Yo los he visto tragarse con avidez la sangre de las bestias carneadas para nuestro uso, pero no por eso que se alimenten exclusivamente con ella, ni con la de los demás animales, como lo han escrito algunos; antes bien su principal alimento es el pescado, la caza, las raíces y frutas del campo, con las cuales y con la miel de los bosques, que tanto abunda, preparan también sus bebidas fermentadas de que hablé en otra ocasión.

Al que permanece algún tiempo en medio de las indiadas poco á poco le causa maravilla el no ver gente defectuosa. De esta circunstancia algunos viajeros se han creído autorizados para pensar y afirmar que los indios, como noveles espartanos, matan las criaturas defectuosas. Es la opinión de algunos historiadores.

Yo, empero, al mismo tiempo que por mi parte confirmo el hecho fundándome en la observación personal, lo explico por las circunstancias físicas y las condiciones sociales en que se encuentran estos indios. La vida más que libre, el alimento por lo general suficiente, no obstante lo que se diga en contra; la desnudez de las mujeres, es decir, sin esos ajustes de cintura y de pecho, el clima sano, al menos para ellos, son todas ellas circunstancias físicas que hacen que sean rarísimos los casos de deformidad en los cuerpos de las criaturas.

Por otra parte: el estado de guerra contínuo, las sorpresas frecuentes, la costumbre de no dar cuartel, las fieras y los reptiles, tienen que dar cuenta de los mal formados, y por lo tanto inferiores en las facultades indispensables para la lucha por la vida. Y las mismas criaturas defectuosas, es probable que no gocen del privilegio que se acuerda á sus coetáneos sin defecto, es decir, que se les perdone la vida á manos de los enemigos victoriosos, y se les conduzca á las tolderías de su nación, para sacar de ellos futuros padres y futuras madres, en una palabra, para que contribuyan al progreso de la nación vencedora.

Todo esto pues, explica suficientemente la falta de individuos mal formados, sin necesidad de que se les atribuya á los indios la costumbre de matar ó dejar morir á los recién nacidos; y por experiencia propia puedo citar un hecho positivo, que desmiente tal supuesta costumbre.

En el mismo centro del Chaco encontré un indio sordo-mudo de unos treinta y tantos años de edad. Por cierto que si hay un defecto que inutilice á un hombre, y lo haga merecer la eliminación de la sociedad, es éste; pero también es uno de los defectos que, aun dadas las circunstancias físicas más favorables, puede producirse en una criatura con facilidad, siempre que ella sea el fruto entre dos personas por demás consanguíneas: estos enlaces no son raros; y no es para que se me acuse de sacar agua para mi molino si digo, que se me ha asegurado que entre los rarísimos defectuosos, éstos, los sordomudos, son los menos raros entre los indios de por acá; entre los cuales, dicho sea, no he visto ni un cretino, ni un *cotudo*, y eso que abundan en la mitad de la República, esto es, en el norte y en todo el oeste.

Y para acabar con mi sordo mudo: cuando supe de él, y lo ví, fué precisamente porque lo había asaltado un tigre, que lo estropeó horriblemente mientras recogía leña. Una prueba más de la dificultad de poder luchar por la vida en estos desiertos si no se cuenta con todos los sentidos. Fuimos llamados para curar á este infeliz, mas él se negó con energía, prefiriendo entregarse á sus hechiceros. Todo esto no obstante me han asegurado los mismos indios, que suele su-

ceder que las madres dejan morir sus criaturas si les falta el padre ú otro cualquiera que las reconozca, y que por lo tanto se haga cargo de alimentarlos.

Este caso empero debe suceder con rareza, así que no debilita nuestra argumentación sobre los defectuosos, si tenemos en cuenta que, entre todos los habitantes de la misma toldería y sobre todo entre parientes, existe una comunidad de bienes que encanta; pero por otra parte debe ser algo frecuente en años de escasez: ésta sin embargo debe sentirse con menos rigor si se tiene en cuenta la variedad de los alimentos que aceptan y la escasez verdaderamente maravillosa á que se conforman en sus necesidades, de las que se desquitan con usura cuando le toca el turno á la abundancia.

Verdaderamente es extraordinaria la elasticidad del estómago de estos salvajes, á quienes cuando no están en movimiento les basta un bocado; mientras que el aire libre, los ejercicios de la caza, de la pesca, de la cosecha y del viajar en pos de estos objetos ó de la guerra, unido todo esto á una salud de hierro, les permite ensacarse como odres.

¡Cosa de notarse! Sea por parentesco de raza, sea más bien por la gran analogía en el sistema de vida, una alternativa parecida de frugalidad extrema, y de enorme voracidad, se encuentra también en el gaucho, y en general en todos los habitantes del campo de la República, sin excluir á los demás pueblos que se hallen en iguales condiciones sociales. Tan cierto es, que las mismas causas producen los mismos efectos adonde quiera que se hallen.

Estos indios son muy celosos de su igualdad. No admiten la desigualación, y las mujeres son las primeras en dar contra las compañeras á quienes las dotes naturales, ó los recursos del marido, les hayan procurado favores y adornos especiales.

No puedo olvidarme de un amargo desencanto que me cupo en suerte una vez. Tajo, mi maestro de lengua mataca, tiene por mujer una hermosura del tipo gitano que á lo lejos se parece á una de las más hermosas señoras de Buenos Aires. El marido estaba enamoradísimo de ella, y yo creí que no podía hacer cosa mejor que regalarle á la esposa algunas baratijas y ropa de vestir. El marido se asoció conmigo al efecto, así que la bella jóven tuvo con qué engalanarse cual ninguna.

Eso que salió á lucirse entre las compañeras, en traje á la orientala con colores varios y abigarrados, la admiración fué general, pero así lo fué también la protesta.

Yo que muchas veces creo haber pecado por el lado del platonismo artístico hallándome una de tantas en la toldería, se me antojó ver á la bella Mataca en el nuevo traje, y me creía con cierto derecho á

exigírselo, pero me fué imposible conseguirlo. El cacique se lo había prohibido, porque las demás chinas se habían quejado de un lujo tal que las hacía valer menos á ellas; y la buena moza se había visto en el caso de repartir con ellas sus vestidos y de contentarse con las sobras, á hurtadillas y de vez en cuando.

Existen pues leyes suntuarias aún entre los salvajes!

CAPÍTULO XIV

ESTADO SOCIAL

(Continuación)

¿Será empero verdad que estos indios se encenagan, como diría Güerrazzi, en el amor, y que gastan sus fuerzas dinámicas y reproductivas en el abuso de Venus, como tantas veces se ha dicho y escrito?

Para el viajero que por la primera vez se encuentra en presencia de estas hijas de la selva, en su estado natural, es vista extraña la falta de algún velo que oculte ó disimule las formas provocativas; y al que es víctima de un prolongado ayuno carnal, puede parecerle peligroso, irresistible, el novel espectáculo de desnudez; pero en verdad no lo es ni puede serlo, en el trato cuotidiano de la vida.

La costumbre evita las impresiones, y con éstas el deseo ó el estímulo á las sensaciones, las cuales tampoco tienen el aliciente de los refinamientos lujuriosos, de las caricias impúdicas y de los requiebros irresistibles. Sensaciones excitadas aún más por el ondulante sérico peplo, de crujido electrizador, ó por el ajustado coturno que ostenta, ya los negros y lustrosos atacados, ya la blanca malla; provocadas con el amoldado corpiño que simula formas plásticas, ó con el picado encaje que deja traslucir los torneados miembros, ó con el flexible guante que completa la elegante *toilette*, conjunto que se vuelve aún más excitador con deslumbrantes collares: tentaciones éstas que despiertan los sentidos adormecidos de los hijos de la civilización.

Eso de tener siempre por delante el traje del paraiso, la misma humildad de las ocupaciones de la mujer salvaje, y la libertad, dejan los apetitos del hombre restringidos á un ejercicio fisiológico que no contraría la higiene.

En efecto ¿quién ignora el atractivo del fruto prohibido? pero ésta es precisamente la que no se conoce entre estos hijos ingénuos de la naturaleza. Por otra parte ¿cómo pueden existir allí las orgías de la lujuria en medio de la pobreza y sencillez?

Aparte de esto hay que tener bien presente que todo aquello que sea funesto para el hombre no se le puede atribuir ni como de origen, ni como permanente; porque en tal caso, ¿cómo podría éste haberse formado y multiplicado?

Así pues, en cuanto á esos vicios que suelen atribuirse á los salvajes, hay que suponer, ó que sea un engaño en el observador, que muchas veces nace de ideas preconcebidas en contra de un estado de vida tan distante de aquel medio en que fué educado, ó de no, que son vicios introducidos con posterioridad al contacto con otra sociabilidad, y que son extraños á la naturaleza de la vida salvaje.

Se ha dicho de los indios americanos que se han vengado de la conquista, y de la viruela que les importamos, con regalar á los europeos el mal venéreo.

Creo que esta es una de aquellas afirmaciones que suelen hacerse sin prueba suficiente, y que se desmienten con facilidad. Se me ha dicho que los estudios de los sabios hacen remontar esta plaga históricamente á los tiempos más remotos. La opinión popular (amenudo errónea) ya de hecho la bautizó de Francia; y los historiadores la atribuyen con toda seriedad á la época de la invasión de Italia por Carlos VIII. El que guste seguir esta pista que vea el capítulo XV del Levítico.

Mientras tanto entre estos indios del Chaco no se conoce tal enfermedad, ó no se conocía antes de ser introducida por los cristianos. Y aunque ello podría explicarse con decir que una peste desaparece ó se atenúa después de cosechadas las víctimas con predisposición á ella; que es la teoría científica, sostenida hoy por la nueva escuela médica, y que, por fin de cuento, me parece que se ajusta á la teoría Darwiniana de la selección, con todo el hecho es como yo lo refiero. Hay otro más, y es, que en esos lugares donde la peste existe no perdona á los indios, mientras que, ó perdona, ó ataca con menos intensidad al negro de Africa, como le consta á todo gaucho de la campaña, en todo lugar donde estas diferentes razas con su presencia se han prestado á la observación: esto lo apunto yo aquí para que le sirva á los que por acaso no se hayan fijado en ello ó lo ignoren.

Estos indios son nómades, ya se sabe, pero no basta: ellos no acostumbran tener animales domésticos; los pocos que tienen de los nuestros es una excepción que confirma la regla.

Ya en tiempo de la conquista se sorprendieron aquellos hombres de la falta de animales domésticos entre los indios, y la repetición del hecho en todo el continente dió á la cosa un carácter tal que ha llamado la atención de los historiadores y filósofos, desde Robertson hasta Humboldt, y de este al más modesto de los viajeros.

Efectivamente, el nomadismo ha existido y existe aún en Asia, sin

embargo allá hubo y hay animales domésticos, como el caballo y el camello. ¿Los Lapones, los Samoyedos. Chutchis y los Peninsulares de Kamskatka, en las regiones árticas. no han amansado aquellos el rengífero, y estos el perro que uncen á sus trineos?

¿A qué pues atribuir esta indudable inferioridad de los nómades americanos? Por cierto que no á la incapacidad de la raza, como á primera vista podría parecer lo más simple y oportuno; porque en tal caso los Groenlandeses no debieron tener animales domésticos, como no los tenían los Esquimales de América, con ser que son de la misma raza, y se halla entre ellos, en la región polar el bisonte, que es algo parecido al buey nuestro, y se domestica.

Por otra parte lo de amansar algunos animales, que á ello se prestan, no presenta á fé una dificultad tal que exija del hombre una elevada capacidad, mientras que algo parecido no puede negárseles á estos nómades; porque la verdad es que los del Chaco siempre han tenido y tienen, ya un avestruz, ya una chuña, ya una charata ó gallina del monte, y sabemos que entre ellos se encontró domesticado el perro mudo.

Yo pienso que este hecho, de la falta de animales domésticos, se debe á tres circunstancias especiales de este continente y de sus habitantes, que son: las condiciones físicas. las sociales, y la escasez, cuando no la falta total, ó casi, de animales domesticables.

Se sabe que en este continente por causas físicas, fáciles de explicar, el frío, en igualdad de latitud geográfica, es mucho más intenso que en el viejo mundo, así que la zona templada es mucho más reducida aquí que allá. Por esto es que debe haber sido mucho más difícil el cuidado y más escasos los medios para la alimentación de los animales domésticos allá entre los habitantes de la parte fría de la América Septentrional donde se halla el bisonte.

Ya sin esto el estado social de los nómades americanos hacía y hace casi imposible la conservación de los animales domésticos. En efecto no obstante que algunas veces una misma nación ocupó ó había ocupado inmensas regiones, sin embargo ella se hallaba dividida en pequeñas tribus á que pertenecían territorios relativamente pequeños, y que no por eso dejaban de estar, como lo están los sobrevivientes, en continua guerra entre sí. De ello se sigue, que allí no había seguridad, condición indispensable para la crianza de los animales y de cualquier otra pacífica labor. Hoy mismo, los indios del Chaco, si bien conocen nuestros animales domésticos, y á veces hacen la tentativa de criarlos, no por eso lo hacen en escala que merezca la pena; porque el mero hecho de tenerlos es ya una tentación para que el vecino los invada y los despoje. Si la vida social hubiese existido, ó hubiese alcanzado al punto de obligar á estos indios á reunirse en

grandes agrupamientos en tal caso, dada la extensión de sus vastos territorios, no obstante el ser nómades, y hallarse en guerras contínuas, les hubiese sido siempre fácil poner á salvo sus animales, en caso de ser invadidos, por medio de la internación.

Por fin la escasez de animales domesticables ha hecho más facil la falta absoluta de los domesticados, la cual á su vez ha hecho menos inevitables los grandes agrupamientos sociales. Esta escasez es un hecho notorio del que tenemos una prueba espléndida, y es, que los peruanos bien dotados de religión, de gobierno, de instituciones agrarias, sin embargo de los animales mayores sólo habían domesticado el *llama*, que, por su forma y resistencia puede muy bien llamarse el camello de los Andes. Por otro lado los mejicanos, con ser que estaban establecidos y, sea dicho, civilizados, como también los bogotanos, no tenían domesticados más que esos animales que nosotros llamamos, de Cortijo, como los conejos y algunas aves: y esto resultaba de que faltaban allí otros animales domesticables.

Es un hecho que los mismos peruanos que domesticaron el *llama*, del que aprovechaban la carne y lana, empleándolo como carguero, como aún se acostumbra en Bolivia, (1) tuvieron que contentarse con hacer de la vicuña, de que en aquel entónces, como ahora, era muy apreciada la finísima lana, un animal sólo para la caza, y esto en razón de que es un animal que no se presta á ser amansado. La caza la hacían en épocas fijas, reuniéndose, por órden del Inca, una multitud de gente y ésta rodeaba una grande extensión alpina con una zoga munida de colgajos y sostenida por estacas; (2) en seguida corrían y encerraban en un pequeño espacio todas las vicuñas, para las que es invencible aquel insignificante obstáculo, que con un pequeño salto podrían salvar. Entónces los *corredores* cierran más y más el cerco, y estrechados así un gran número de éstos animales, entre los precipicios por un lado y las cuerdas por el otro, hacen de las vicuñas facil presa. Esta caza se limitaba cada año á tal ó cual zona, y así se impedía la extinción. Hoy se acostumbra un sistema igual en la región de los Mojos, y, aunque sin limitación de zona, no parece que vaya á menos la cría.

Este ejemplo nos asegura que si allí hubiesen tenido otros animales domesticables los hubiesen obligado á servir; y nos demuestra por analogía que en todo lugar donde no los encontramos ha debido suceder por falta ó suma escasez de aquellos, como efectivamente sabemos que ha sucedido.

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(1) El llama como animal de carga sólo conduce cuatro arrobas de peso ó sean 45 kilos: mientras que el mulo carga 12, es decir, 135 kilos.

(2) El *Chaco* de los Quichúas, el *formido* de los latinos. Ed.

Sea como fuere, tal hecho tiene que ser causa de que en este continente haya resultado brusca la transición de sus habitantes del estado nómade y salvaje al sedentario de la agricultura; mientras que en el viejo se interponía, y se interpone aún, el estado nómade, pero unido al pastoril.

La falta de este estado intermedio queda explicada, según me parece, suficientemente con la falta de animales domesticables, y por consiguiente de animales domesticados. De ello resulta que se equivocaría, á lo que yo pienso, el que al encontrarse repentinamente en presencia de naciones dadas á la agricultura, como el Perú, Méjico y Bogotá, rodeadas á la vez por una multitud de otras aún en estado salvaje, quisiese explicar esta anomalía fundándose en la evolución seguida por las razas asiáticas, por medio de la hipótesis de una invasión de naciones venidas de otro continente, que de improviso pudiesen haber introducido é impuesto el propio modo de vivir. Tal hecho más bien ha tenido su razón de ser indispensable en las circunstancias naturales que se han expuesto ya: y en cuanto á lo que se refiere al Perú, creo poder afirmar con conocimiento de causa, que la lengua hablada allí, y que era la oficial en tiempo de los Incas, tiene su parentesco con la que usan los salvajes.

Si eliminamos esta especie de *Deus ex maquina*, es decir, una supuesta invasión ó inmigración de naciones del viejo continente á la región ocupada por las tribus arriba citadas, se impone esta pregunta: ¿á qué se debe atribuir la civilización del Perú y de Méjico? Países eran éstos en que se encontraba instituciones de las que algunas podrían reputarse copiadas del viejo continente, á saber: culto á los Astros, Dioses, Templos, Sacerdotes, Monjes, Castas. En Méjico, tenemos un calendario, que Humboldt halló parecido al egipcio; en el Cuzco, capital del Perú, un período de años casi igual al de los Hebreos; allí también las cuerdas de contar, como alguna vez en la China; un gobierno pedagógico, una distribución periódica de la tierra; un aparejamiento de novios hecho por el Inca públicamente, que nos traen á la memoria los gobiernos pedagógicos y las leyes agrarias de todo el viejo continente; el jubileo de los Hebreos, las costumbres nupciales de los Asirios. . . .

Es una pregunta esta que se la ha hecho, y se la hace, todo hombre que piensa, pero que no se contesta así no más. Algunos historiadores, y de peso, se sacan esta cuenta: en las regiones ocupadas por estos imperios reina un clima benigno sí, pero enervante, allí pues las naciones reunidas se prestaron con más facilidad á la disciplina de la vida civilizada. Un hombre, ó una nación vencedora, pudo sojuzgarlos é imponerles un despotismo, feroz como en Méjico, manso como en el Cuzco, espantoso siempre. El genio humano, que humano

es donde quiera que sea, se desarrolló allí con los mismos procedimientos que en otras partes: de aquí nacen la civilización y las analogías del viejo continente.

Yo no estoy en todo de acuerdo con este raciocinio, especialmente con la primera parte. Me pesa no conocer las condiciones físicas de Méjico, pero conozco las de la mayor parte de la región incásica, y allí encuentro la explicación natural de los hechos.

La necesidad fué la causa en este imperio y no la enervación de sus habitantes.

En todo el Perú, en todo el declive occidental de los Andes, en casi todo el oriental, y en Bolivia, no es posible la vida, no digo del hombre, pero ni tampoco de los demás animales, sin la agricultura, que no puede existir sin la irrigación.

He aquí dos causas que obligan al hombre á detenerse, á asociarse, y por lo tanto á sujetarse, á constituirse y á proporcionarse sucesivamente ayes, disciplina, religión, gobierno. El despotismo no explica nada. Naciones fieras y naciones mansas lo han sufrido, lo sufren y lo sufrirán, sin valer por eso menos que naciones que han gozado de su libertad. Al contrario, en el Chaco, en la Pampa, y en el Brasil, en Norte América, el suelo brinda espontáneamente las frutas de los árboles, las raíces, los cuadrúpedos y las aves, mientras que los ríos y las lagunas dan peces en abundancia. He aquí la no necesidad de unirse y de constituirse: he aquí naciones que probablemente preferirán hacerse destruir por otras, á quienes la necesidad obligó á procurarse la civilización, y con ella las armas de la victoria, y no constituirse de grado en esclavos de la labor que no necesitan. Y sin embargo, en la mayor parte de estas regiones el clima es benigno y á menudo enervante, más que en el Perú, que en Bolivia, que en Méjico.

Ahora, figurémonos que haya sido razón de guerra, ó la necesidad de estenderse más (las dos causas más poderosas de la emigración en masa), lo que metió una raza en el territorio del Perú, al poco tiempo después de haberse aumentado más allá de lo que permitían los escasísimos recursos de aquel paupérrimo territorio, la veríamos en el caso de exigir de la tierra con la labor aquel alimento que le falta, y que no puede procurarse en otras partes adonde viven enemigos numerosos, felices, superiores en fuerza.

Me parece tan cierto este génesis que estoy por creer que, si los historiadores se hubiesen dado cuenta de las condiciones físicas innatas de estas regiones, no hubiesen podido pronunciarse por otro alguno, y casi estoy por asegurar que ni en Méjico se hallan en condiciones de suelo y de clima que permitan la producción y la vida sin la labor.

Las analogías en las instituciones y en las costumbres con naciones del viejo continente, que existieron en otro tiempo, aunque no prueban que se deban á las invasiones de estas, desde que se refieren á una época que se remonta á decenas de siglos atrás, sin embargo en algunos detalles nos obligan á tener en cuenta la influencia individual que pueden haber ejercido personas arrojadas sobre estas playas por la furia del Océano y que aquí permanecieron. También pienso yo que bien podieran resultar en su mayor parte como producto del genio humano, cuya armonía resultaría así patentemente manifestada á través del espacio y del tiempo.

Por otra parte si desechando la explicación anterior, se prefiriese la hipótesis de una unión material, ó cuando menos, una comunicación prehistórica y anterior á todo recuerdo del hombre, entre los dos mundos, en tal caso nos veríamos obligados á declarar la inmensa inferioridad de los americanos.

Esta inferioridad, ó fué original en la raza, que vino á poblar aquí, ó resultó de las condiciones físicas de este continente: inferioridad, dicho sea, que se ha encontrado también en todo el reino animal de las américas.

Está reservada á las ciencias físicas y naturales y también á la no muy amada filología, la solución del importantísimo problema, el problema magno de la Humanidad.

[Nota del traductor.—Al remitir esta traducción al señor Pelleschi para ser corregida y aprobada, lo hice pidiendo disculpa por algunas omisiones que hacía yo del texto original: estas tenían que ver con ciertas apreciaciones que estaban en su lugar en la relación de viaje, pero que tenían su inconveniente en una publicación del carácter de ésta.

El autor, con la amabilidad que le caracteriza, condescendió con mi pedido, haciéndome esta advertencia, que en algo sufría la hilación de la idea. Pido pues disculpa al autor, y ruego al lector quiera tener esto en cuenta si da con algún vacío.

Por lo demás estamos muy de acuerdo el señor Pelleschi y yo: ni todo lo bueno se halla en nuestra civilización, ni todo lo malo entre los salvajes de la selva. ¡Dios nos libre de llamar civilización cristiana á la que está en contacto, salvo brillantes excepciones, con los pobres indios del Chaco!

Léase lo que acerca de estas cosas escribía en 1570 el padre dominico fray Domingo de S. Thomas, en el capitulo XXIII de su «Gramática Quíchua».

«Despues que venimos los christianos á esta tierra, han tomado los indios la manera de jurar nuestra, y aún algunos tambien (para su mal) que creen, que jurar bien, es ser buen christiano, y cierto á mí me a contecido lo que diré. Que preguntando una vez, en cierta provincia á un cacique si era christiano, me dijo, Aún no soy del todo, pero ya lo comienzo á ser, y preguntándole yo que sabía de christiano, me dixo, Sé ya jurar á Dios, y jugar un poquito á los naipes, y comienco ya á hurtar. A lo que yo entendí debía pensar aquel pecador, que como ser sastre, no era más de lo que ellos comunmente ven hacer á los sastres, que es coser, y lo mismo en los demas oficios, assí creia que no era más, ser un christiano de lo que ellos comunmente á los christianos habian visto hacer».

Pilcón, Enero 1º de 1897.]

1: Pelleschi S17 Mataco

PARTE SEGUNDA

ENSAYO DE ARTE DE LA LENGUA MATACA

I

ORIGEN DE ESTA PARTE DEL TRABAJO

Homenaje á Juan María Gutierrez

Mientras esperábamos la llegada del auxilio pedido, que debía demorar algún tiempo, me pareció el mejor modo de ocupar mis ratos de ocio obligado dedicarlos á recoger vocablos de los indios que nos rodeaban.

Repetidas veces había oído decir que estos salvajes apenas si tenían un idioma pobre de voces y de formas; y como yo, por lo poco que había leído en materia de la filología, estaba persuadido que más bien lo contrario podía ser lo cierto, quería también contribuir con mi contingente de experiencia personal, al objeto de formar opinión al respecto, y comunicarla después á los demás. Cabalmente antes de salir de Buenos Aires, habiéndome visto con el doctor Juan María Gutierrez, me había dirigido él estas palabras!

«Ocúpese Vd. si tiene lugar, de la lengua de esos salvajes: dada la falta completa de tradiciones y de datos arqueológicos acerca de éstos, la lingüística está llamada á desempeñar un gran rol en el descubrimiento del orígen, ó al menos de la correlación, si es que ella existe, con otras razas en tiempos bastante remotos, es decir en comparación con la historia del hombre actual. Aparte de esto la lingüística va convirtiéndose en ciencia, y con el tiempo nos sorprenderá con los espléndidos resultados que está por alcanzar para ilustrar la historia de la humanidad».

A lo que agregó como quien me alentaba.

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«El campo de la lingüística aún está virgen en su mayor parte, por lo tanto promete abundante cosecha al que lo cultive; aprovéchese de ello, que no perderá Vd. su tiempo».

¡Cómo era posible desatender tan autorizado consejo? Aún cuando sintiese que no me era dado contribuir con más que una insignificante pedrezuela á la pirámide de la lingüística, no por eso dejaba de sentirme estimulado por aquellas palabras, y si se quiere comprometido. Más tarde, mientras me devanaba el cerebro para ver de desenredar tal cual regla de ese fárrago de voces que había podido recoger, cada y cuando resultaba que acertaba en alguna de mis pesquizas, esa complacencia íntima que experimentaba yo, se acompañaba y se duplicaba con esa otra que conservaba en ciernes, haciéndome la ilusión que había vuelto ya á Buenos Aires, que volaba esa misma noche á casa de Gutierrez, que le presentaba el resultado de mis tentativas y que departía largamente con él.

Hombre era él de gran talento natural, aumentado por su profunda erudición. El amor á las artes y á las ciencias lo dominaba. Su tolerancia estaba en proporción á sus vastos conocimientos y á su libre modo de pensar. Era afable en su trato, como que todo se lo debía á su propio esfuerzo, y como que había experimentado todas las vicisitudes de la vida. A los 70 años en su elevada posición literaria y administrativa, sabía como alentar, con una palabra que fuese, al más modesto estudiante, y sabía acoger y discutir con la más cordial deferencia la conversación del más oscuro de los que lo visitaban cosa esta no tan común entre hombres de su edad y de su saber.

Este placer empero debía de ser perdido para mí. A mi regreso la noticia que me arrebató la atención en el primer diario que cayó en mis manos, al saltar de la embarcación, fué la de su sepelio, ocurrido la víspera de mi llegada ¡¡—!!

¡Pueda tu memoria, Oh Gutierrez, permanecer en los corazones de tus compatriotas tan viva y tan duradera como en el propio del que estas líneas escribe, el cual siempre y fresca la conservará presente! ¡Quieras aceptar como á tí dedicadas, y amparar con tu nombre, los pocos renglones que sobre el tema de las lenguas indígenas escriba yo en el curso de estas páginas; porque á tí te las debo y sin tu patrocinio no me hubiese atrevido á publicarlas!

II

PRINCIPIO DEL TRABAJO. PATÍCULAS DE RELACIÓN PERSONAL

Al principio de mi labor mis tentativas poca esperanza de éxito me daban. A nuestro bordo llevábamos un indio que se decía ser Mataco,

á quien al punto hice comparecer con mira de interrogarlo acerca de los objetos que vestíamos, y sobre aquellos que nos rodeaban. Sucedía que después de unas cuantas palabras el hombre se aburría. Se veía que la fatiga intelectual, con ser que era ligerísima, no era hecha para él. Cuando empero llegaba á preguntárselo por segunda vez, él me hacía comprender que ya me lo había avisado y, tomándome la libreta de apuntes, daba con aquella de las pocas carillas escritas donde estaba asentada, é indicaba más ó menos el punto donde se hallaba. ¡Y no obstante que al verlo se hubiese dicho que miraba hácia otra parte mientras yo escribía! Cuando entre nosotros se dice—*hacerse el indio*—por—hacerse el desentendido—se dice la pura verdad.

Con esto y todo poco ó nada adelanté.

Mas cuando de ahí á pocos días fuimos arengados por el cacique Toba, y que parecía que éste ladraba en vez de hablar, entonces sí que me convencí que no me quedaba más partido que guardar mis hatos, tan inutil hubiera sido pretender sacar algún provecho de aquellos ladridos.

El hombre empero propone y el caso dispone. Pocos días después varamos, y como no pudiésemos seguir adelante, me quedaba mucho tiempo disponible hasta para los caprichos. Los indios se hallaban amontonados en torno de la embarcación. Muchos caciques nos venían á visitar, á ninguno de ellos les entendíamos palabra....en suma, la fruta apetecida estaba allí:—me dispuse á aprovecharla.

El indio es muy desconfiado y no quiere que se aprenda su lengua mas allí se hallaba Faustino, un cristiano desertor, y yo á hurtadillas, sin que lo advirtiesen los indios, empecé á interrogarlo. Quedaba yo sin embargo poco satisfecho, al encontrarme con tanta confusión en las palabras, cuando se trataba de alguna frase, lo que yo atribuí á lo poco que él comprendía de la cosa. Al fin pudo establecerse mejor relación con los Indios, el trato franco por parte nuestra, el empeño que mostraba yo de repetir sus palabras como si fuese cosa preciosa, cuando se ofrecía la ocasión, y en fin, uno que otro regalo, todo esto les hizo perder la desconfianza, muy particularmente á los más jóvenes, que hacían gala de proporcionarme *de motu propio* los nombres de cuanto objeto se me ocurría.

Pero era curioso: una palabra repetida se cambiaba sin saberse el porqué. A veces sonaba ya doblaba, ya diptongada, al grado que, con acentuar el uno más que el otro de los dos sonidos que la componían, no concordaba la una con la otra; pero muchas veces el cambio era en realidad de la sílaba, por decirlo así, algunas, el aumento ó pérdida de alguna de éstas.

Una mañana se hizo la prueba con Natalio Roldan. Ocupamos un cuarto de hora para establecer entre los dos cual era el verdadero

sonido que debería reproducirse con signos castellanos, y si era éste ó aquel el que se había hecho oir en una palabra dada. Esta incertidumbre confirmó á Roldan en la opinión que el idioma Mataco era un enigma que no se podía reproducir, que carecía de reglas, que no se podía aprender, como lo habian asegurado los mismos Padres Misioneros establecidos en el territorio cristiano cerca de la frontera.

Yo empero, que estaba acostumbrando el oido, ya empezaba á darme cuenta de que el idioma Mataco no era después de todo ese potro indomable que se pretendía; y eso que si bien alcanzaba á sorprender los sonidos, no comprendía aún el porqué de los cambios de ciertas sílabas.

Tomé el partido de dejarme de toda pretensión de discutir, me puse á acumular frases examinando y confrontándolas más tarde para sacar de ellas algunas reglas, después de haberlas escrito tal como me parecía haberlas oído.

Un día paro al hijo de un cacique y me pongo á preguntarle los nombres de todas las partes de su cuerpo. Desnudo como estaba no cabía el error de confundir las carnes con la ropa que las cubría.

No hube bien concluído cuando me apercibí que aquellas quince ó veinte palabras, principiaban todas por un *nu* ó un *no*, la *u* y la *o* sustituyendose una á otra con frecuencia, y con una diferencia de sonido casi imperceptible.

¡Voto á ....! me dije; este *nu*, ó es un artículo ó es una partícula de relación, porque es moralmente imposible que tantas voces tengan una misma raiz. Me parecía poco probable que fuese artículo; y no obstante, me acordaba que cuando muchacho alguno me preguntaba el nombre de las partes de la cara, solía contestar yo por el artículo, diciendo por ejemplo: *la boca, el ojo*, etc. ¿Porqué no podían aquellos indios también ser tan muchachos como yo?

Pero muy en breve salí de dudas. Hago las mismas preguntas acerca del cuerpo mio, y él me las repite mudando el *nu* en *a*, y á veces alguna de las otras letras que seguían al *nu*. Fué como si un rayo me iluminara: vuelve empero la incertidumbre, y en el empeño de salir de ella, aprovecho la ocasión de haber cogido un chimango para hacer las mismas preguntas acerca de las partes de este. En las respuestas muchas de las palabras principiaban por *lu* ó por *lo*, y en lo demás del tema quedaban iguales más ó menos á las correspondientes del hombre, menos ese famoso *nu* ó *a*.

Entónces se me apareció casi en cuerpo y alma la siguiente conclusión: luego los Matacos prefijan una partícula variable á sus voces radicales, y ella debe expresar una relación. Pero ¿cuál? .... Rebusco entre mis apuntes, y especialmente entre las frases, y me veo que toda vez que la cosa se refería á la persona que hablaba, empe-

zaba el nombre por *nu;* si se refería á la persona con quien se hablaba, por *a;* y si á tercera persona, por *lu* ó *lo*.

Fué una revelación para mí. Fué una clave que me abrió el secreto de un gran departamento en que se hallaban las explicaciones de un gran número de palabras; fué la brújula que me hacía acertar en mucha parte del laberinto de las frases.

¡Cuánto no fué el placer que experimenté!

Y estas partículas no sólo se prefijan á los nombres sustantivos, sino tambien á los verbos, á los adjetivos, cuando se ofrece; y hasta se abusa de ellos por pleonasmo, tal y como lo hacemos nosotros con algunas partículas en nuestra conversación familiar, y aún más en la lengua vulgar.

Siguiendo adelante en la averiguación de la razón de ser de estas partículas, hallé algo que me confirmó en la inducción precedente: *nu* es sincopación de *nuj-ca*, que dice «mío»; *a* lo es de *aj-ca*, «tuyo» *lu*, de *luj-co*, «suyo», «de él»; esto como iniciales de nombres sustantivos; que como prefijos de verbos, pueden considerarse sincopaciones de *noj-c-lam*, «yo»; *am* ó *ham*, «tu»; *lutzi* ó *toj-lutzi*, «él» ó «aquél». Esto sin perjuicio de que en los verbos á *lu* deba preferirse *toj*, que aislado quiere decir «este»; mientras que *toj-sam* y *toj-lani* es «ese», *toj-licué* y *toj-lei-tzi*, «aquel».

¿No se impone, no es bello, al propio tiempo que sencillo y cómodo, el interparentezco entre el pronombre personal, el adjetivo personal y la partícula de relación personal?

¿Erase posible que una lengua tal pudiese carecer de reglas? Por todo esto yo me sentí animado á seguirles la pista.

Acostumbrados por lo general en nuestra lengua, á encontrar la raíz y lo inmutable al principio de las dicciones, era como para hacer perder el juicio esto de las cosas al revez, mientras no se daba con los cánones que lo explicaban. Pues entónces, atención; regla fundamental: Todo el que pretenda estudiar una lengua que carezca de gramática escrita, haga caso omiso de cuanta regla le sirve para la suya; porque de lo contrario hallará tan difícil la tarea de dar con el buen camino, como lo sería reconocer una persona á través de su disfraz.

III

FONOLOGÍA

a. Confusión de K. I. Ch etc.

Entre los Matacos es muy frecuente la mudanza de los sonidos *quiá, quie, quil, quió, quiú*, en *tzá, tzé, tzi, tzó, tzú*, y en *chiá, chié, chil,*

chió, chiú y vice-versa, como también de *quió*, etc., en *tió, tié*, etc. Así podemos decir indistintamente por «oveja», *tzonataj, quionataj, chionataj*, así como *huenquié* ó *huentié* por «pajarillo». Sin embargo, el uso más general de uno de los sonidos con preferencia á los demás, distingue á los dialectos entre sí. Así pues, los Matacos limítrofes de los Tobas usan el *tzá, tzé*, etc., los que delimitan con los cristianos el *chiá, chié*, etc.

Estos extravíos, por decirlo así, fáciles de comprenderse en ciertos casos, si uno se fija bien, siempre que se trate de temas polisílabos y aún bisílabos, confunden terriblemente si las hallamos en voces que constan de una sóla sílaba. Un ejemplo al caso: ¿quién había de decir que el *tzac*-«da» de los unos fuese la misma cosa que el *quiáj* ó *quioj* de los otros?

Con todo no es menos curioso observar como ciertas mudanzas fonéticas son instintivas, si se nos permite la expresión, del hombre, como que las encontramos también entre nosotros los Europeos; por ejemplo, los Milaneses dicen *chiesa* y no *quiesa;* los Españoles *cuchara* en vez de *cuquiara* ó *cuquiava*, como en italiano, y así muchas otras palabras: *squiachare* y *stiachare* (1) aplastar. Así también, entre los Quichuizantes, los Santiagueños á menudo usan el *ua*, cuando los Collas ó habitantes de Bolivia usan el *ña:* ex. gr. *ua* por *ña*, «ya», *uójca* por *ñójca*, «yo»; lo propio que sucede en italiano, en portugués y en español, por ejemplo: *nina* por *niña, farina* por *fariña*, etc.

¿Qué diremos de las inversiones de letras y sílabas? ¿Cuántas veces no sucede al hablar con rapidez que se trasforma una palabra con la inversión de sus letras? Ahora esto es un verdadero instinto inherente en el lenguaje que ciertas voces de un idioma le suenan un tanto mal al adepto de otro afín; así el italiano *cantilena* reaparece como *cantinela* en español; *guirlanda* de aquel como *guirnalda* de este; *birbone, ùribim*, el *vir bonus* (?) latino, etc.

Pues bien: estos Matacos también á veces hacen trocatinta de sus palabras; ex. gr. en boca de ellos *melon* se vuelve *nelom*, y así lo demás.

b. Confusión de L con R, etc.

Entre las particularidades de esta lengua de notarse es la falta completa de voces en que entre el sonido *r*, letra que de hecho los Matacos no pueden pronunciar, no siendo con grande esfuerzo, y aún así incorrectamente.

Sus vecinos empero poseen la *r*, es decir los Tobas, los Chulupís y

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(1) En italiano se escriben: *schiacciare* y *stiacciare*.

los Chiriguanos. Los Mocovitas sirven de eslabón con su pronunciación de la *r* francesa en la garganta casi como *g r*.

Probable es que á muchos les parezca que el sonido frances de la *r* peque por exceso más bien que por deficiencia; mas yo pienso lo contrario, y mi opinión se confirma al observar que á un Mataco, para decir Pedro, le sale más facil decir *Pegro* que *Pero*, y *Peiló* que *Pegro*. De cualquier modo, el que la *r* pueda pronunciarse más ó menos mal por los Matacos revela que la falta del sonido *r*, en el idioma de estos indios, no se debe á un defecto orgánico en el aparato vocal, sino á convención, ó cuando menos á la tendencia de la lengua. La falta de uso con el trascurso de los siglos y por la acción de la herencia fisiológica, ha podido ser causa de que hayan perdido en parte la aptitud para hacer sonar la *r*, y, andando el tiempo, la podrán perder del todo.

Con esto y todo puede concederse que sea cuestión de oido, el cual poco acostumbrado al nuevo sonido, se esfuerza por alcanzarlo con la consiguiente dificultad de poderlo reproducir por la acción simpática de los órganos bocales: cualquiera de nosotros puede haber experimentado esto al empezar á aprender una de tantas lenguas extranjeras.

c. La D y sus degeneraciones.

Tampoco pueden pronunciar la *d* con claridad, con ser que no faltan palabras en que suena algo que se aproxima; pero así mismo sólo en forma de *td* y *th* casi inglesa al principio de dicción en que cabe un golpe de voz más pronunciado. Ejemplos: ¿Cómo?—*tdé hoté;* Come—*theuicque;* Tirador—*thilalol.*

d. B. D. F. G. P. T. unidas á la semivocal L.

Todavía me falta que oir, de boca Mataca, la pronunciación de la *b, d, f, g, p, t*, unidos con la *l*, y digamos, con la *r*. Esto da lugar á esos grandes disfraces de las palabras á traves de los cuales quedan estas desconocidas; como por ejemplo: *ccailá* en vez de *cabra; Puiló* por Pablo; *hléno* por *freno* y *hueiló* por *pueblo*. Y esta es otra particularidad, que una labial, que hace una sóla sílaba como inicial de *ud, ué, ui, uó, uú*, no la pueden pronunciar, y en su lugar hacen sonar una *h* aspirada (suave). Este defecto, ó degeneración de sonidos, se encuentra también amenudo entre la gente del campo de esta República. Así á veces por *bueno* dicen *güeno*, y por *fuego, juego*.

A propósito de estas articulaciones de los sonidos es curiosa cosa como concuerdan con la pronunciación de mi maestro del idioma Chino, un cocinero inteligentísimo que sabe escribir en su lengua, llamado Ayaó. Los Chinos, aparte de no poseer la *r*, como es notorio,

no pueden pronunciar esas mismas combinaciones de letras que no saben hacer sonar los Matacos, ni tampoco la *d*, aparte de tantas otras; así me acontece muchas veces que cuando discurro con Ayaó, me parece que discurro con un Mataco, á quien mucho se aproxima en el color de la piel, en los ojos al sesgo, el cabello crinudo, y la nariz aplastada. Así por decir «Adios» dice—*alio*; por «tres», *tles*; por «propio», *lópio*; por «señora», *señola*, por «teatro», *teetelo*. Muchas veces me es casi imposible adivinar la voz castellana que pretende reproducir, como cuando hace sonar *teetelo* por «teatro»; *olaejaio*, por «ovejas»; *lialio* por «diario»; *poole* por «pobre»; *huclo-lia* por «buen día» y *huela-loche* «por buena noche».

Y, ya que se ofrece, debo notar que hasta ahora me resulta que estos Chinos tienen un gran número de voces que terminan en *lo*. También es digno de mención, según me parece, el modo como la *l* hace las veces de la *r*, y en general de las demás combinaciones que les cuesta reproducir. Ahora en cuanto á la *r* entre los Chinos, debo confesar que tengo una palabra, entre las doscientas reunidas, en que figura una *r*; podría suceder sin embargo que la posición de esta letra contribuya á facilitar su pronunciación, como acontece con la *d* entre los Matacos. La palabra á que me refiero es *tai-hi-rá*, «teatro», en que la *h* se pronuncia de tal manera que le quita mucho de su energía á la *r*. ¿Será extrangera? Esta lengua sacrifica mucho á la eufonía y por eso tiene, al encontrarse dos vocales, más apóstrofes que el italiano y francés por ejemplo, *nam-uu-am*=«yo-no»; y llega hasta la elisión de sílabas de las que no deja más rastros que una consonante ó una vocal reforzada. De allí ciertas agrupaciones de consonantes que deben hacerse sentir todas, como por ejemplo en *atplei*, que debe pronunciarse *at-p-lei*, casi átt-(e)-p-(e)-lei ¿cómo te llamas? En esto sigue la moda del argot francés y del diálogo inglés con los verbos auxiliares *do*, *will*, *shall*, etc. También tiene consonantes duplicadas, hasta en los finales, como *yelatáss* caballos. Por lo mismo debe fijarse la atención en todo elemento que figure en las palabras y en las frases, y no despreciarlo. El momento menos pensado lo vemos reaparecer, con todo su tren silábico, diría literario. En estas diferencias estriba gran parte del arte oratorio de estos indios. Con todo, hay terminaciones como la *ƒ* y la *que*, que amenudo se suprimen acentuándose la letra que las precede. Ejemplo: *yelatá* por *yelatáƒ*, caballo; *udtó'c* por *udtó-cque*, mucho. Por otra parte la acentuación varía con la posición de la palabra en la frase. Por ejemplo: «asado» *pu-cué*; «pon el asado» *ph'o a-pú-cue*. También dichas terminaciones mudas se dejan advertir cuando les sigue otra palabra, ó cuando se quiere pronunciar con más distinción. Les pasa lo que pasó con el *doncque* (dunque) y el *avecque* franceses.

e. Vocales y diptongos

En el esudio de estas lenguas, si usamos nuestras cinco vocales para reproducir los sonidos Matacos, hallamos que es inevitable el uso de los diptongos, quiero decir con esto, la reunión de dos ó más vocales que hayan de pronunciarse simultáneamente, de suerte que reproduzca aquel sonido complejo del diptongo que los abarque á todos: vendrían á ser diptongos naturales, que, si se imaginan fijados por la escritura, darían lugar más tarde, con las alteraciones inevitables de la pronunciación, á diptongos convencionales como por ejemplo: la *ou* francesa, la *ae* y *oe* latinas, la *eu* alemana. Por lo tanto yo opino que en una lengua escrita, los diptongos se deben considerar como *simbolos* de una diferente expresión fonética anterior.

En estos estudios se advierte la insuficiencia de un sólo alfabeto, porque este deberá cambiar según cada lengua; á no ser que se quisiese adoptar una sarta de letras más larga que una letanía. A esto se agrega que el nuestro (el italiano) es de veras uno de los más pobres, sobre todo por la falta de un signo gutural, y de una aspiración; sonidos estos muy frecuentes en muchísimas de las lenguas de todo el mundo. Y aún más pobre tendría que ser, si de afuera no le hubiésemos ensartado la *k*, que no le pertenece á nuestro alfabeto.

f.—Sonidos ajenos al fonetismo castellano

Si es nuestro propósito escribir el mataco con los signos de nuestro alfabeto (el italiano) habrá que ingerirle las siguientes modificaciones, que servirán en general para escribir muchísimas otras lenguas: *ch* alemana: serviría también la *j*; pero esta se confundiría con *j* italiana, que es *i*; una *h* aspirada, como en algunas palabras francesas, y como en alemán al principio; un signo que exprese la prolongación del sonido de una vocal, sin ser reduplicada, para la que puede bastar la misma *h*, como se acostumbra por los alemanes y que responde según me parece, al hecho físico de la pronunciación de la *h*; una *th* inglesa, pero en el sentido de un sonido entre *t* y *d*: vendría á ser como un diptongo de consonantes; un diptongo *óü* sin el sonido de *u* como en francés, pero que se haga sonar ambas vocales rapidísimamente. Los diptongos *óéü* ó *éü* se pronuncian como ya se ha dicho; una *h* aspirada y nasal, que yo señalo con una coma arriba á la izquierda, para poderla distinguir, y una *l* mojada que casi parece el *il*. *Vice Versa*: suprimir la *r*, la *d*, la *f*, la *v* y casi la *b*, que sólo se presenta en compañía de la *p*; y la *p* sola que no se halla sino con la *b*, y después con un sonido especial que se presta

á ser reproducido aproximadamente con una *h* al fin, formando así como quien dice el diptongo *p-h*; *p* con soplido al fin.

De esta manera, sin la introducción de caractéres extraños, que así no más no se retienen en la memoria, y que hay que conocer ya desde antes, he escrito yo mi Mataco, mi Guaraní, mi Quíchua, mi Mocoví, mi chulupí, mi toba y mi lengua de la China, con el fonetismo castellano, en mis apuntes; porque en mi libro he adoptado el italiano, sustituyendo la *j* con la *ch* y la *y* con la *j*.

Estos signos son bastantemente conocidos, de suerte que también nosotros, es decir, el lector y yo, que no somos doctos en la lingüística podemos leer las palabras sin notable diferencia de pronunciación, satisfaciendo así las exigencias del curioso, si bien no las del cientista.(1)

Campea en este idioma una entonación narigal. Casi no hay vez en que la *h* la *j* y la *q* en principio de sílaba no deban pronunciarse narigales, á no ser que se le quite la consonante final de la sílaba precedente. Este carácter lo he encontrado en todos los idiomas de Sud-América con que he estado en contacto, pero en ninguno como en este de los Matacos. Tal vez sea porque aquellos los conozco aún menos. A esa tendencia atribuyo el cambio de la terminación castellana *ando* en la india *anno*: por ejemplo, *tomando, tomanno*: tampoco de ella se han escapado nuestros idiomas, como lo revelan las letras de nuestro alfabeto *m* y *n* y como lo declara sonoramente el *en* y el *em* en boca de los franceses y cómicamente todo el mundo al hablar á las criaturas con voz de mimo.

Otro carácter de esta lengua es la morbosidad de sus sonidos. El lector podrá comprenderlo con sólo hojear el diccionario: no hay vez casi que la misma palabra parezca dicha en la misma manera aún por la misma boca: peor todavía si forma parte de una frase. ¡Es desesperante! y se prestaría á quien sabe cuantas pruebas de inferioridad si, afortunadamente para los Matacos, no tuviesen una contraprueba contundente en él, en esto compañero, gloriosísimo, polifónico cuanto polietímico inglés.

CAPITULO IV

DE LAS PALABRAS Y DEL MODO DE FORMARLAS

Es interesante y gracioso notar como esta gente forma palabras para designar un nuevo objeto en su lengua. La observación es la suprema maestra.

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(1) En esta traducción, lo mismo que en los diccionarios, se ha empleado el alfabeto castellano para la reproducción fonética de las palabras indias.—J. P.

Por ejemplo para nombrar «campanilla» dicen: «panza de araña»—*quiu-hút-tzét;* al fusil lo llaman como nuestros padres «arcabuz», esto es: «arco de fuego»—*itoj-letzej* derivado de *itoj*—fuego y *letzéj*—arco; á la munición llaman balitas, á la italiana, es decir: *c-lóquass* de *c-ló*—bala y *quass'* terminación plural de diminutivo; eslabón, que jamás habían visto, como no habían visto lo demás que se nombra arriba, llaman ellos *itoj-cquid*, esto es: remedio ó instrumento del fuego; pedernal, llaman *ten-thé*—piedra; á la mecha llaman *itoj-léss* de *less*—haz, grupo, familia; cápsulas, llaman *c-lo-'hi* de *c-lo*—bala y *'hi* partícula que indica vaso continente ó posesión; el espejo es *tope-yaj-hi*, y *tope-yaj* quiere decir imájen, sombra; media es *ecolo-búth*, que se deriva de *ecoló*—pie y *bhút*—tapa, cobertor, en una palabra, tapar ó cubrir. Por el contrario zapato, llaman *nissót* ó *sót*, probando con eso que ya los conocían de antes; porque tal vez usarían una especie de sandalias, como las que calza la gente de campo, á que esta da el nombre de *usutas*. Las hacen de un pedazo de cuero: éste sirve de suela, y dos tientos, tambien de cuero, después de pasar el uno entre los dedos pulgar é índice del pie, lo aseguran arriba del tovillo. A los fósforos los llaman como nosotros, así: *itossass*, síncopa de *itoj-quuass*, que quiere decir: *fueguitos*; y á la caja de fósforos *itoj-hi-huass*, es decir, guarda-fueguitos.

Una palabra que siempre me ha llamado la atención y me ha inspirado la curiosidad de hallarle la etimología es *yúccúas*, que quiere decir «tabaco», cosa que no había en el Chaco; yo creo no haberme engañado al derivarla de *yu* ó *iú*—quemado, y *cúas*, que significa «morder, despedazar, picar»: ahora da la casualidad que en estas dos acciones consiste el uso y el resultado del tabaco. Por otra parte ¿Cuándo se dice esto: dame á morder quemado, no se dice más ó menos lo nuestro—dame con qué fumar—esto es, con que hacer humo?

Otra analogía en el criterio, fuera de las que resultan de las voces detalladas y de muchas otras, la hallo yo en aquello de emplear *téi* para designar los ojos y el rostro, tal y como poéticamente se dice aún hoy entre nosotros los italianos que usamos *viso*, por cara, del latín *visus*, que es «vista».

La hoja de la puerta llaman *hlappé bhut* ó sea tapa-puerta; y en esto me parece que aciertan mejor que nosotros, que carecemos de una expresión igualmente clara y precisa.

Designan con la misma palabra *huoléi* á la lana, al pelo y al cabello, haciéndola preceder del nombre del objeto respectivo. Nosotros no hacemos otra cosa con ser que pasa inapercibido cuando decimos «cabello» por significar el pelo de la cabeza, mediante una sincopación que desorienta por completo la etimología. De estas alteraciones tan frecuentes y naturales en nuestra lengua, tenemos otras tantas y más

aún en el Mataco, con la consiguiente dificultad de poderse dar cuenta de ellas.

Aplican tambien el mismo nombre á las hojas, dando á entender con eso que para ellos son los cabellos de las plantas: y al hacerlo no se apartan tanto de la analogía en las apariencias, si se tiene en cuenta que allí predominan las mimosas de hojas las más subdivididas, ó sea en términos de botánica. *pinadas* y *bi-pinadas* voces que de por sí justifican el nombre Mataco tan de acuerdo con la figura científica que se contiene en la expresión *pinada*.

Merece que se haga mención del artificio con que se distingue la planta de su fruto; esto se hace por medio de una flección. Ejemplos mistol (el árbol) *o'hó-yucque*; fruta del mistol—*o'hóyaque*; vinal—*attéc-que*; la fruta—*attáje*; algarrobo negro—*uossot-etzüje*; la fruta—*uossot-etzáje*, etc.

Aquí se nota la mudanza constante de *u* en *a*. Nosotros no hacemos cosa mejor cuando llamamos *pera* á la fruta del *pero*, *manzana* á la del *manzano*, etc. Esto no quita que haya otros modos de decir.

Los nombres de parentesco cambian con el sexo. ¿Debe esto causarnos admiración á nosotros que tenemos *padre* y *madre*, *yerno* y *nuera*, cuando podríamos haber dicho *yerno*, *yerna*. Curiosa cosa es que todas las lenguas claudiquen del mismo pié, si se nos permite la expresión, y las americanas no son ninguna excepción. Aún más, estas últimas no sólo diferencian los nombres con el sexo de la persona á quien se atribuye el parentesco, sino también con aquel de que lo invoca. Por ejemplo: en Araucano el padre trata al hijo de *fotún*, y á la hija de *ñahue*, al contrario, la madre llama al hijo *coñi huenthü*, *coñi dorno*, siendo que *coñi* quiere decir *hijo* en general, en boca de la madre. En Quichua el padre llama *churi* al hijo, y *ñusi* á la hija; y la madre, *huahua*.

En la lengua China, según me informó mi intérprete, *Ayaó*, que hace poco conseguí á razón de dos francos por hora, hijo se llama *Tsaé*, é hija, *Pnoé*; padre es *Lu-táo*; madre, *Loümuü*; hermano, *Ghoó-séi-loü* hermana, *Ttai-tzt-é*.

En Mataco tenemos los siguientes nombres: padre, *quia*; madre, *ccó* hijo, *locsé* ó *lotsé*; hija, *lectzá*; cuñado, *quayenécque*; cuñada, *ticquié*; hermano, *lecquiilá* ó *cjculá*; hermana, *cjinno*; tío, *uitoc*; tía, *uidóje*; sobrino, *lec-jié-ios*, probablemente incorporación de hijo del hermano sobrina, *cjidió*; suegro, *quióti*; suegra, *catelá*; primo, *huoc-lá*. Encuentro á más de esto que para decir *yerno* y *nuera* se usan las mismas expresiones que para *cuñado* y *cuñada*; y que para cuñado se usa también la misma palabra que para yerno: lo que me hace ver que se encierra una equivocación.

Las diversas palabras empleadas para designar un mismo grado de

parentesco, según sea varon ó mujer quien la use, deben atribuirse, según yo pienso, al método aglutinativo adoptado al principio para determinarlo, bien que las alteraciones subsiguientes han hecho perder de vista el génesis etimológico. De hecho está claro, que para dos conyuges, un sobrino, por ejemplo, será: para el uno, hijo de un hermano, para el otro de un cuñado, ó á su vez, de una hermana y de una cuñada.

Si agregamos y aglutinamos las palabras que expresán estas diversas relaciones, vendremos á tener un mismo grado de parentesco, por ejemplo un sobrino, llamado de cuatro maneras diferentes.

Una forma igualmente interesante es aquella para los pronombres demostrativos, que se parece al recurso francés, porque consta del pronombre *toj* este, el *ce* francés, y de las partículas locativas, *licné*, para «aquel»; *letti*, ó *lani*, para «ese»; y de otras voces más, entre las cuales está *tzi* para «este»; *tzi* el equivalente de *chi* y *quil* é interesante, porque volvemos á dar con él en la lengua Araucana. Estos temas cuando hacen las veces de adjetivos demostrativos se abren: el *toj* queda prefijado al sustantivo y el *licné*, y *tzi* etc, se subfijan, quedando estas últimas indeclinables, mientras que el *toj* se declina. Ahora pues ¿no sucede la misma cosa con los demostrativos del francés, como por ejemplo con *ceci* y *cela*, que en el plural hacen *ceux-ci*, *ceux-la*, y se abren para recibir la voz de que se trata?

¿Y formas tales no revelan una grande armonía en la inteligencia humana en que se dan la mano los mismos recursos lengüísticos para expresar un mismo orden de ideas, no obstante la distancia que media entre una y otra raza?

Merece también especial mención la derivación siguiente que revela todo un orden de ideas. «No» es *ka*, «nada» es *kiá*, «nadie» es *kiái*: aquí se ve conservada la raiz constante, y con más claridad que en las correspondientes voces nuestras. Igualmente, tenemos *tde* «no» y *that* «nada», los dos empleados siempre al final de la palabra ó de la frase.

Vamos ¿qué cosa hay en la filología más elegante ni más ajustada á la razón que los temas Matacos que expresan poseer, contener, ejecutar ó excercer un oficio? La letra *h* (cuando lleva un apostrofe debe pronunciarse como narigal) figura en muchas voces, por no decir en todas, que expresan posesión ó capacidad. Ahora pues tenemos *hi* y *huu* que sirven para expresar eso que contiene, al que posee y al que hace alguna cosa; y tenemos el *huét*, que significa «casa», el lugar en donde. Por ejemplo: pescado es *yácsét*, vivero *yácsétte-hi*; zapatos *nissóhéss*, zapatero, el que los vende, *nissohesse-hi*, zapatero, el que los hace, *nissohésse-huu*, zapatería, *nissohésse-huét*. Y en todos los casos análogos se valen del mismo artificio. ¿En qué les van en zaga á las demás lenguas?

Así para Venús, emplean la misma imágen que nosotros y los latinos, es decir lucero, licifer, *ijuála-hu* madre del día; así como llaman la muñeca, «madre de la mano» *tcué-huo*; la abispa tic-lan, *tic-lán-huu* «madre del tic-lan»; al pulso lo llaman «corazoncito» *tdul-lecuáj*.

Pueden faltarle al Mataco algunas articulaciones, por el contrario le sobran otras. Entre estas priman *quiá*, *quié*, *quíl*, *quió*, *quiú*, y *cquiá*, etc, que juntas con otras de igual sonido son tan frecuentes que es como para quedarse en la duda si no se trata de la misma sílaba repetida mil veces en el mismo sentido. Nos consta ya que *quiá*, *quié*, etc, pueden trocarse en *tzá*, *tzé*, etc. ó en *chiá*, *chié*, etc, ó en *tchiá*, *tchié*, etc. Por otra parte es frecuente la inversión de los elementos constitutivos de la palabra: por ejemplo: «ancho» *quü-tzaj-hu* é *i-tzaj-quié*: se comprende entonces cuanto puede ejercerse la oratoria de estos indios en la pura forma para decir una misma y sola cosa. Tal artificio debe ser general. El general Mansilla en su genial «Los Ranqueles» lo experimentó explicándosele con la palabra *razones* lo que serían combinaciones; y yo lo experimenté con los Tobas, cuando nos arengaron, por media hora, para decirnos en diferentes formas la misma cosa, según me lo aseguró el ladino Faustino.

En la formación de sus palabras compuestas siguen las costumbres del inglés y del alemán: por ejemplo, los guantes, que son *hand-schuhe* en alemán, esto es, zapatos de las manos, se llaman *cqüét-pbut*, esto es, tapa manos. Lo propio sucede en las frases de negación; ex. gr. Yo no veo. *Ich sehe nicht* en alemán, viene á ser en mataco: *nu-ihennitde*, esto es, yo veo no; precisamente como se expresan los del Milanesado también.

Tienen nombres generales, que si se quiere representan una abstracción, como que dicen, pajarillo, pescado, árbol, no obstante que distinguen entre las especies dándoles nombres especiales. Aún más todavía, hay que confesar qne tienen nombres abstractos, porque fuera de *nunca, siempre*, tienen otros, como por ejemplo «temor», que para ellos es *ual;* palabra con que tambien expresan temblor. Terremoto se llama así *hunat udi*, esto es, «de tierra temblor» tal y como en castellano en que se dice, «temblor de tierra». ¿Será pues que para estos Matacos temer es temblar? ¿Y no es acaso así, tomando una parte por el todo, que se han formado nuestras palabras abstractas, en la mayoría de los casos? Ahora temblar es una, la más común, de las muchas manifestaciones del miedo.

Yo digo que estos indios tienen cumplidas las facultades intelectuales humanas y los criterios del juicio, y con un desarrollo tal que pueden considerarse nuestros semejantes en su modo de pensar y en su antigüedad. La distancia que existe entre nosotros y ellos sólo existe en el mundo actual de los hechos y de las ideas que á estos se

refieren: ella empero no está en proporción con lo que media entre las facultades de ellos y las nuestras. Y se comprende.

¿Cuántos años se cuentan, cuantos eran, y cuantos son, los indivíduos entre nosotros que se han aprovechado del beneficio intelectual de la ciencia, de la moral y de la educación gentil y elevada? Bien pocos son si tenemos en cuenta la misma antigüedad histórica del hombre y el número de los hombres. Los efectos pues de la herencia fisiológica bien poco ó nada deben haber cambiado el fondo común de la humanidad en el mundo entero durante los períodos de sus civilizaciones parciales.

El no haberse hecho estas reflexiones ha sido causa de que se maraville el vulgo al hacerse cargo del estado de adelanto y progreso relativo en que se encuentran los pueblos salvajes.

La corta distancia pues intelectual y moral que los separa de nosotros es una prueba elocuente de la antigüedad inmensa del hombre, necesaria para elevarlo del estado del antropomorfo á aquel del hombre, aunque sea en su estado de actual salvajismo.

CAPÍTULO V

AUMENTATIVOS Y DIMINUTIVOS

Otra cosa que me hacía perder el juicio eran los nombres de los animales domésticos que fueron introducidos á la América de Europa en la época del descubrimiento ó de la conquista.

Sabido es que, en los países en que se introducen por primera vez cosas nuevas, se introducen en los más de los casos los nombres que sirven para designarlas: se sabe también cuan precioso elemento ha proporcionado tal hecho. no sólo á los filólogos, sino también á los etnógrafos, es decir, á los que se ocupan de la distribución y descripción de los pueblos.

Bien pues, á mi me sucedía que, al preguntar el nombre del caballo, de la vaca, de la oveja etc., se me contestaba con voces del todo distintas de las castellanas.

Me da gana de reirme todavía cuando me acuerdo de las torturas á que sometía las palabras matacas por reducirlas, á fuerza de supuestas alteraciones, á la raíz castellana.

Un buen día cúpome la suerte de tomar dos palomas en una trampa.

Teníamos abordo un hermoso *bull-dog*. En mataco al perro llaman *sinój*: nosotros le habíamos puesto el nombre de *palomo*, que los Ma-

tacos traducían literalmente á su idioma así: *ucquinatáj*. Sucedió que un día me dice un indio, al hacerle caricias al perro y como por alabarlo *¡Sinoj-táj!* en lugar de *Sinoj* ó *Ucquinatáj*. Empecé desde luego á comprender que la tal partícula *táj* expresaba tamaño ó superioridad, que era un afijo suelto, y que podía juntarse ó quitarse á las palabras, para modificar su sentido. Vuelo á mis apuntes, fojeo las páginas, repaso todos los nombres aumentándoles el *táj* al que carecía de él, y en un instante brotan á mi vista, con gran contento de mi alma, las etimologías verdaderas, bellas, filosóficas, científicas de mi *quiuuassetáj*, «vaca; de mi *yelatáj*, «caballo»; de mi *chionataj*, «oveja»; de *quiuasset*, ciervo, *yeláj*—tapir, *chionaj*—gama, con el famoso *táj* que los engrandece, ennoblece, los extiende y declara superiores.

Ahora pues, de repente aprendí, en las palabras por docenas que terminaban en *táj*, á descartar esta sílaba, y lo mismo el famoso *uu* ó *a* ó *la*, y á fijar el oido y la vista en los sonidos esenciales á la palabra; y al propio tiempo que percibía con más facilidad descubría también el génesis y leyes de su variación.

De ahí en adelante se me abría una nueva región en la que de buena gana me metí.

No se escandalice el lector de esta especie de entusiasmo que le parecerá ver en mí. En mi lugar otro tanto hubiese experimentado él; porque el hombre es esclavo de las circunstancias; todo un Ministro de Estado que vaya de soldado raso tendrá gusto al notar la mirada de aprobación de su cabo por un «presenten-armas» bien ejecutado; como también el filósofo al ser elogiado por su dama, por haberla ayudado bien á devanar la madeja.

¿Cómo podía ser que no se alegrase un cualquiera como yo al ver aparecer entre las manos, convertido en metódico, elegante, un idioma al que precisamente se le negaban estas cualidades?

Pues bien, estos Matacos poseen el aumentativo en *táj*, bajo el punto de vista físico y moral, por decirlo así, y descriptivo. Así de *icnú*-hombre, hacen *icnú-táj*—hombrón, y de *inót*—agua, *inót-táj*—aguardiente; de *ahló*—palo, hacen *ahlotáj-yacaré*, «casi palo».

Para el diminutivo á veces usan la partícula *quuáj* y *quiáj*; por ejemplo, de *coló*—pie *coló-quuáj*—piecito; de *cuéi*—mano; *cuéi-quiáj*—manecita; con esta última palabra dicen ellos también «manco». Así á un cacique llamado *Manco* en castellano, porque lo era en realidad, le decían en mataco *Cuéi-quiáj*. Este uso lo aplican también á lo pronombres por gala lo que no cabe en italiano, aunque sí en castellano; porque en esta lengua se puede decir *esa* y *esita*: uso muy frecuente en el campo.

Estos subfijos *táj* y *quuaj* y *quiáj*, con ser, que son partículas bien definidas, no obstante pueden, y acaso deben, considerarse ya co

mo inflexiones; porque solas nada expresan, y porque por otra parte, y sobre todo, ellas se declinan, y no las palabras á que van unidas (1) Y debe notarse que en esto de la declinación siguen la regla opuesta á la de los subfijos en los pronombres demostrativos, lo propio que pasa con los diminutivos en francés, italiano, etc. Esos *taj* y *quiaj*, plural *tass* y *quiáss*, se abren como los demostrativos, por ejemplo: «caja de fósforos» *itoj-'hi-cuass*, es decir, «fuego-caja-itos»: muestra de incorporación. (2)

Por fin, parece que á palabras extranjeras les gusta anteponer una *i*. Por ejemplo: ñato *iñato*, en lo cual concordarían con los mocoviés. Pero podría ser simple exigencia eufónica.

CAPÍTULO VI

ONOMATOPEÍAS Y OMOFONIAS CURIOSAS

Son pocas las palabras de estos indígenas que pueden considerarse *onomatopéicas*, esto es, que imitan los sonidos que expresan. formas á que algunos atribuyen el orígen del lenguaje, desarrolladas más tarde por la inteligencia del hombre.

Gritar ó clamar es: *óhn*; relámpago, es: *jlépp*; mudo, *huó-huó*; tos, *cacojtáss;* grillo, *li-tzil;* loro, *quie-quié* y pelícano, vulgarmente. *chajá*, *tzá-coj*, que uno y otro derivan su nombre del grito que dan. No faltan otras muchas palabras por el mismo estilo.

En seguida referiré algunas voces matacas semejántes á otras del viejo mundo.

Sí—*hié* en mataco, en inglés *yes, ya* en alemán *gía* en italiano; nó es *ká* en mataco, *cke* en toscano, *kein*-nadie en alemán, *kaé* en-*akka*; hijo *tzé* ó *ssé* en mataco; *tzé* boemo, *tzae tzé* chino; enfermo *iell* ó *vell*, mataco, *ill*, inglés; «por»-*op* mataco, *ob* latino: añádase que *p* y *b* se sustituyen entre sí en todas las lenguas con la mayor facilidad; campaña ó campo *ajlú* en mataco, *agro* latino é italiano; téngase presente que los matacos usan la *l* en lugar de la *r*, así que *ajlú* es por *ajrú*; perro, *sinoj* mataco, *cynos* griego; este una inversión de letras como entre *melon* y *nelom*; gallo, *húh* ó *kúh* mataco, *coq* francés; grillo, *li-tzil* mataco, *zillo* toscano; casa, *hauet* mataco, *haus* alemán,

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(1) Encuentro en mis notas que «taj» es alguna vez sincopación de «oitaj», que quiere decir «casi».

(2) En mataco fósforos se traduce «fueguitos»—«itoj-huaj» (h eufónica por c) siguiendo aún en esto el uso nuestro.

house inglés y *huasi* quichua; con, *uuitá* mataco, *with* inglés; y, *utcuei* mataco, *atque* latino.

Además, como otra curiosidad haré notar, que en el chino se encuentra en número superabundante las sílabas *tziá*, *tzié*, etc., *schiá*, *schié* (sch=x catalana) etc., *tzá*, *tzé*, etc., como también *ttai* ó *tai*, que significa «grande», y *lo*, que no sé todavia lo que quiera decir, pero que lo hallo siempre al final de las palabras. Este hecho, combinado con la casi identidad de pronunciación con la mataca, puede merecer alguna seria reflexión de parte del lingüista, no por el lado del parentesco, sina como fenómeno de concurrencia.

CAPÍTULO VII

GÉNERO, NÚMERO, CASO, SINCOPACIÓN. ¿ARTICULO?

a. Género

No me parece que los sustantivos tengan género: únicamente en los pronombres y en los adjetivos demostrativos se hallan á veces ciertas mudanzas que casi me hacen sospechar una distinción de género. Ella empero no pasa de ser una ligerísima sospecha.

Con todo á los nombres de animales hembras les subfijan el *tsiná*, que quiere decir «hembra», y «mujer», si se emplea sola: ex, gr.—yegua es, *yélaiáj-tsiná*. Para los que son machos suelen agregar *asnáj*, que cabalmente quiere decir *macho*.

De Número y Caso tanto se ha dicho, que es llegado el momento de dar algunas explicaciones.

b. Número

Yo tenía una convicción tan firme que estos habitantes del Chaco deberían poseer un plural formado con el arrimo de alguna palabra en que se expresase el concepto de pluralidad, como ser *mucho* ó algo parecido, que siempre andaba en pos de ella. Por otra parte, nada de extraño que tenía: los guaraníes en efecto arriman *hetá*—mucho al singular, y así forman tema de plural; los quichuas subfijan *cuna*: estas dos naciones son ó eran vecinas de las tribus de que hablo. Muchos otros pueblos se valen del mismo artificio que se llama, por aglutinación ó arrimo: lo propio hacen los Akka de Africa.

Parecía pues muy natural que los menores siguiesen á los mayores. Además ¿no se declara que el estado de aglutinación en los idiomas es propio en general de los menos avanzados?

Cierto es que en este caso también parecería como si los pueblos que se valen de tal recurso debieran ser menos adelantados; lo que está muy lejos de ser así.

En una palabra cada sistema tiene su lado flaco, sin que por ello desmerezca en su bondad de fondo ni de su fuerza para con sus adeptos. Erame pues lícito aceptar como máxima este cánon de lingüística.

Las contestaciones empero á mis preguntas en que se incluía un plural no eran satisfactorias. Ora el plural de una voz terminaba de un modo, ora otra de otro, y en todas se podía meter un *ntocq*—mucho. Más aún, así como todo lo demás de la expresión variaba, así también se quedaba uno en ayunas de lo que pudiese contener la forma plural. Hacía mis preguntas con números y la incertidumbre era la misma. Por ejemplo: ¿Dos caballos? preguntaba, y se me respondía: caballos dos; ¿Dos hombres? Dos *icnú*, *icnul* ó *icnuil*. Parecía que fuesen terminaciones un poco variadas debido más bien al diferente modo de pronunciarlas que por otra causa.

Repito todo esto, porque pueda servirle de norma á cualquiera de los muchos que hoy en día se divierten paseando entre salvajes, ya de Africa, ya de América. Si no presumen demasiado de su propia ciencia y penetración puede serles útil para algo.

Mientras tanto, me sorprendía que «nosotros» y «vosotros» se formasen de «yo» y «tu» mediante el mismo afijo. Así: de *noj-lám*—yo, se hace *noj-lám-il*—nosotros; de *am*—tú, se hace *am-il*—vosotros Pero en este caso se trataba solo de los pronombres en que es fácil que resulte de una excepción á la regla. Sin embargo, esto mismo, al llamar mi atención á un caso preciso, me proporcionó el cabo del enredo.

Estos Matacos, no sólo tienen el plural formado con *ntocq*—mucho, sino que también poseen otros formados de diferentes maneras con flexión varia: en suma cuentan con declinaciones diversas que usan unas con exclusión de otras, y que obedecen, en general, á las reglas siguientes:

Las palabras terminadas en *ó* vel *e* toman una *i* en plural; ejemplo: *coló*—pie, *coloi*—piés; *huentié*—pajarillo, *huentiéi*—pajarillos. Las que terminan en *aj* cambian j con *ss*: en este caso se incluyen todos los aumentativos en *taj* y diminutivos en *quiaj*; ejemplo: *igüela*—luna, mes *igüélass*=meses; *yelataj*—caballo, *yelatass*—caballos. Las que terminan en *ú* toman una *l* que se pronuucia parando la parte de la lengua contra el paladar, y que suena casi como si fuese *il*; ejemplo: *cannú*—aguja, *cannúl* casi *cannuil*-agujas. Las terminadas en *t*, en *oj* y en otras letras las cambian con *ess*; ejemplo: *yápset*—pescado, *yápsetéss*—pescados; *tdoj*—cuero ó piel, *tdojess*—cueros. Las terminadas en *l* muchas veces toman *ess*, con pérdida en algunas de la *l*; ejemplo: *tsel*—panza,

tzeliss—panzas; *yél*—enfermo, *yiss* (ó *yéliss*)—enfermos: bello ejemplo este último de mudanza.

Aquí entran muchas excepciones, y probablemente otras reglas, que paso por alto por no hacer de ello una letanía.

Casi estoy por creer que tienen el dual, como los Araucanos y Guaraníes, y entre nosotros los Griegos, pero no lo aseguro. Para ello cuento con lo siguiente en mis apuntes *cqüél*—la mano, *cquéyai*—las dos manos; *noj-lamil*—nosotros, *noj-lamáss*—nosotros dos; *amil*—vosotros. *amass* vosotros dos. Repito empero que no estoy seguro de que no sea una forma duplicada del plural.

Con los numerales pueden ó no, á elección, usar el plural para los sustantivos que los siguen, en cuyo caso si se quiere está de más. A los adjetivos les conservan el singular y los postergan al sustantivo.

c. Caso

No encuentro ejemplos en número suficiente que me autoricen á atribuir declinación de caso también á esta lengua, no siendo que se quisiese considerar como tal en algunos temas, el subfijo *ca* de genitivo; ex. gr. *Peilo-ca-Uicquii*, la gente de Pedro. El uso que hacen de las posposiciones, las preposiciones nuestras, pueden hacer las veces de los casos.

Esto no obstante, advierto que los pronombres personales *yo* y *tú*, por lo menos en el singular, tienen su declinación de caso, mientras que *toj*, este, parece que sólo tenga el acusativo en *toja*.

Las declinaciones de los pronombres recogidos resultaría, pues, ser como sigue:

SINGULAR	SINGULAR
Nom. *Yo:* nojlam, nu, no'ni.	Nom. *Tú:* ám, *o* ham, *y* á.
Gen. *De mi:* noj-ca.	Gen. *De ti:* aj-cá.
Dat. *A mí:* nú-ho.	Dat. *A tí:* ám-u *o* hám-u.
Ac. *Me;* nuy-a *ó* nu.	Acus. *Te:* ám-a *y* a-i.
Abl. *Conmigo:* nuy-ej.	Ablat. *Contigo:* ám-ej *o* ám-quie.
PLURAL	PLURAL
Nom. *Nosotros:* noj, lam-il, na *ó* inát.	Nom. *Vosotros:* am-il *o* á.
Nom. *Nos, dos:* noj, lam-áss, *é*, innamáss.	Nom. *Vos, dos:* am-ass, *o* á.

Las terminaciones en *l* y en *il* pienso que deben ser alguna degeneración de la palabra él, que quiere decir *otro*, empleada esta palabra originariamente para expresar el plural, el cual plural resultaría

no ser más que una forma aglutinativa olvidada y variada por alteraciones posteriores.

d. SINCOPACIÓN

En esta lengua se acostumbra mucho la sincopación, sin duda por eufonía, pero que, con la alteración y confusión de las palabras facilita el error y hace difícil dar con la verdad. Por ejemplo: «¿Me quieres?» *Yajdémin nuya*, que representa este otro: *yaj-a-hemin nuya*. «Yo no te quiero», *Namahemin, i-e. Nu-am-a-hemin*. Yo mismo, poco antes de escribir estos renglones, había creido que *nam* fuese «no», cosa esta que me confundía, porque en el presente caso no daba con el *nu* que debía expresar la primera persona. Después de haber cotejado muchísimas frases recién se me abrieron los ojos.

VIII

DE LAS FORMAS NEGATIVAS

El idioma mataco cuenta con muchos negativos pero los coloca de diversas maneras. Es curioso lo bien que se comparan con los de otros idiomas de la América Meridional hablados por naciones que no se supondría fuesen en realidad emparentadas.

Entre estos negativos prima el *ka* «no», que se usa sólo, y que se prefija también á los adjetivos, contradiciendo así el significado de la palabra. por ejemplo: *matt*, es cierto, y *ka-matt*, falso. Es curioso que los Akkas, los supuestos enanos de Africa, tienen esta misma palabra para decir «no», según se ve del ensayo gramatical del abate Beltrame de Verona.

Otra partícula negativa es *tdé*, que siempre se subfija, por ejemplo: *mát*, cierto; *matti-tdé*, falso.

Nótese el aumento de la *i* para suavizar la palabra. Estos aumentos y disminuciones son las que más le hacen perder el tino al estudiante de esta lengua, sin esperanza, por decirlo así, de poder llegar á cabo de las dificultades. Veamos otro ejemplo: *nu-huen*. tengo, *hueni-tde*, no tengo.

Después ahí está *am*, que se prefija á los verbos, por ejemplo: *n'amhuen*, no tengo; ahí está *yaj*, que es interrogativo y es imperativo, y se prefija á los verbos: es el *ne* de los latinos, salvedad hecha de la colocación; ahí está *laja* que también quiere decir «sin». Ejemplos: No me mates, *yaj-lon-nu;* ¿Me quieres? *Yaj-a-hemin-nuya?* Viuda, *laja-chiécuó-ya*, esto es, sin marido.

IX

DE LOS ADJETIVOS

a. DEL MODO DE ADJETIVAR

Me encuentro ahora delante del enredo de los Adjetivos, de los Comparativos, Superlativos, de los Numerales y de la Flección del Verbo. No hay porque preferir el uno al otro y doy principio con aquel que se colocó en el primer lugar.

Parece como si los adjetivos deberían ser otros tantos tallos aislados de tal suerte, que bastaría apartarlos con la mano para abrirse al menor esfuerzo un camino. No sucede tal cosa. De ellos muchos hay que tienen las raíces y las ramas enredadas entre sí al grado que se necesita de hacha para desenmarañarlas.

Hay una buena cuenta de adjetivos que se destacan allí como empalados y sin poderlas sacar en limpio de donde vienen ni á donde van: estos, si se quiere, son los más. Ahí, empero, están otros cuya geneología está en evidencia. Entre estos se distinguen los posesivos, que se forman de las raíces de los pronombres con el aumento de la partícula *ca* «de» (también posposición de genitivo), y *co*, que debe considerarse modificación de *ca*. A más de *ca* y *co* usan tambien *lo*, en los mismos posesivos, sobre todo, según me parece, con *mio* y *tuyo:* así pues se dice mio (nuj) *nuj-cá, nuj-có* y *nuj-ló;* tuyo, *ac-có* y *al-ló;* cuyo? (de quién?) *atdec-lo*.

Otro modo de formarlos es con *tzaj*. Ejemplo: miedo, *uái* ó *huái;* miedoso, *huain-tzaj*. Otra forma sería con *ya*, pero esta mas bien parece un participio de presente. Ejemplo: *nu-huai-ya*, yo miedoso, que tengo miedo; *acchecuoya*, que tienes mujer ó que tienes marido.

Otra manera es la de arrimar la posposición *ej* al sustantivo: Ejemplos: hambre, *na-in-ló;* hambriento, *na-in lo nej*, esto es. que tiene hambre; ahora, *cquiá*, (fresco ó nuevo), *cquiá-yej*, es decir, de ahora.

Y á propósito de los adjetivos, es curioso que de casi todos los que expresan la contra de una cualidad, por lo general buena, se forman del adjetivo que la designa y de una partícula negativa que le precede ó sigue. Por ejemplo: cierto, *matt;* falso, *ka-matt* ó *mattildé*, esto es, no cierto. Bueno y lindo, *hiss* y *tzi;* feo, *kat-zia* y *tzitdé;* lejos, *tocuery;* cerca, *tocuei-tde;* en lugar del último se dice también *ca-tu-ta*, en que *catú* quiere decir el codo del brazo, y por traslado curva, vuelta esquina, etc.

Estas formas suelen usarse también con sustantivos. Por ejemplo:

remedio, *ckia;* veneno, *ka-ckla* (no remedio). ¿Y no encontramos en nuestras lenguas también este giro cuando decimos *incierto* por *no cierto, descortes* por *no cortés*?

Podría decirse con todo que estos Pieles Rojas carecen de ciertos refinamientos que suavizan nuestra lengua, en que por ejemplo se hace una distinción ceremoniosa entre «falso» y «no cierto», entre «lejos» y «no cerca.»

Ello puede ser: no carecen empero de algunas otras distinciones, como la que existe entre «forastero» y «extranjero», como que llaman al primero *ajlú-taj-jlé-lé*, esto es, «él de muy afuera;» y al segundo, *ic quiomjlé-lé*, esto es, «él de abajo». En efecto, para estos Matacos los extranjeros viven abajo, cerca de la embocadura del río y allende el Paraguay. Del lado de arriba están los Cristianos que ellos llaman *Chihuéle*.

¿De donde sacaron ellos esta palabra *Chihuéle*? No fué del color? porque el blanco llaman *pelaj*, y al amarillo *yaccatdé*, esto es, *no negro*: demostrando que para ellos la contra del negro es el amarillo, Por verdes ó por azules no nos habrán tomado, por más que pudiesen sus ojos adolecer de Daltonismo. ¿Habrán querido llamarnos *rojos*. Tampoco, porque rojo es *icquiótt*. que ésta bien distante de ser *Chihuéle*, que digamos.

Si pues, *Chihuéle* quiere decir «lindos hombres.»

Fijémonos bien. *Chi*, como lo hemos dicho al principio, es la misma cosa que *tzi*, y sería lo mismo que *qui*. Ahora *tzi* es una raiz que se halla en *ka-tzi-a* y en *tzitdé*, para decir «no lindo» y «lindo no». Además se halla en *tzilataj*, ó *chilataj* lindo. A propósito de esto el público cristiano, por corruptela de la primera parte de la voz, dice *chilátta*. *Chilatáj* se compone, en primer lugar, de *táj*, partícula aumentativa, y de *Chila*. En *Chila* el *la* es partícula, que, como se vió en el caso de *lo*, de *ca*, y de *co*, si se subfija á la raiz, sirve para formar adjetivos. Resulta pues que *Chi* es la raiz que da significado á *Chilataj; Chilataj* empero quiere decir lindo en grado superlativo, así que *chi* da la idea de hermosura.

Hemos visto que *c-lelé* es palabra que quiere decir, *que es de*. Ahora pues no puede haber dificultad alguna, tratándose de una lengua como lo es esta, que tanto sacrifica al oído en admitir que *c-lelé* se haya modificado en *güele* ó *huéle* por degeneración ó por alguna otra regla con la que no se ha dado aún. Por lo tanto: *Chihuéle* es igual á *Chic-léle*, igual á—Los que *son de los lindos* esto es—*Los Lindos*.

Perdóneseme que me complazca con una etimología que me hace participar, aunque no lo merezca, de una de las cuatro cualidades declaradas por un filósofo griego indispensable para la felicidad terrenal, á saber: holgura, amigos fieles, gustar de la música y ser hermo-

so ó ser tenido por tal, que viene á ser la misma cosa en la práctica.

Ahora entre estos indios, por más que uno sea algo feo, siempre tiene que parecer algo lindo. Voto á . . . . ¿No son pues racionales estas formas? Los que en definitivo revelan un procedimiento por aglutinación.

b. De la Comparación

Para formar los comparativos emplean *homó ehom*, que quiere decir *mas*, y posponiendo *taj* que espresa superioridad. No ligan empero los dos términos de la comparación con un equivalente de nuestro *de* ó *que*, como por ejemplo: Pedro es mejor mozo que Pablo; porque en este caso también dirían, por medio de una circunlocución: Pedro es mejor mozo como no lo es Pablo. Es un giro un poco estraño, mas yo lo encuentro muchas veces repetido en mis apuntes. Amenudo la partícula *ya* sigue al comparativo, por lo cual paréceme que haya otras formas más, si bien no las he descubierto aún.

c. Del Superlativo

Para el superlativo emplean *ntócq* mucho, como se acostumbra en tantas otras lenguas. A veces alargan el sonido de una sílaba. Por ejemplo: lejos *tocuéy;* muy lejos sería *tocuéey*, acompañando la voz con ademanes. Es una costumbre también de los Araucanos, y que puede llamarse nuestra en ciertos casos. Y es lo natural.

Otra forma es la de prefijar una *a* al positivo ex. gr. *his* lindo. *ha-ís* muy lindo; *tocuéy* lejos, *a-tocuéy* muy lejos.

Como ya lo he dicho, tienen aumentativos en *taj* y diminutivos en *quiáj* ó *cuáj*, partículas que subfijan y que son declinables, mientras que el sustantivo que las preceda permanece sin mudanza alguna: la declinación consiste en el cambio de *j* en *ss* para el plural.

Para decir «menos» usan *yaj-lom*, que sería lo mismo que *yaj-lehom*, ó sea, «no más», *le* partícula y *hom*; empleando aquí también la aglutinación, común á toda esta forma de adjetivos. Esta lengua es á lo que parece, muy lógica, y cuando toma una dirección persiste hasta el fin. La cuestión pues es de comprender este giro en primer lugar, y después de no perderlo de vista en alguna de sus vueltas y revueltas.

X

DE LOS NUMERALES

Es general entre los indios del Chaco, no contar sino hasta cuatro: ex. gr. los Mocovies, que confinan por el Sud, con las provincias de Santa-Fé y de Córdoba y por el Oeste con la de Santiago; los Matacos que por el mismo rumbo parten términos con esta misma y con Orán; los Tobas, que quedan encerrados entre dichas naciones y el río Paraguay, siguiendo el cual penetran al territorio boliviano; los Vilelas y Chulupíes, que en la actualidad no pasan de ser una que otra tribu ó familia, dispersas entre las naciones nombradas, ó absorbidas por ellas.

Allí, empero están los Chiriguanos, y no sé si algunas naciones más, todas establecidas en Bolivia, todas ellas en la inmensa planicie boscosa llamada Gran Chaco, que cuentan indefinidamente, y están las otras indiadas del Chaco, que más se aproximan al Norte, que cuentan hasta más de cuatro, á estar á lo que me dijo mi primer maestro abordo, quien con ser que era mataco, me suministró expresiones para números más altos. Efectos estos del contacto.

A propósito de contar sólo hasta cuatro, veo que Quatrefages, en su último trabajo *La Especie Humana*, parece poner en duda este hecho, que él interpreta de diferente modo, sin extenderse á explicar el porqué. Parece que él, cuando más aceptaba la falta de término que las expresase, pero no la del concepto de las diversas cantidades. Aún cuando psicológicamente, por decirlo así, pueda aceptarse tal hipótesis, filológicamente hablando, los hechos la contrarían; y comprendiéndose cuanta relación existe entre la palabra y la idea, hay que admitir, que esta, con la falta de aquella, por lo menos revela un estado tal de confusión, qpe no admite de precisión en la palabra hablada; tal y como entre nosotros no se puede usar el tecnicismo de un arte ó ciencia que no se posee, por muy bien que se conozcan y distingan sus productos.

Por lo que á mi respecta citaré un caso personal que le sirva al lector para formar su criterio.

Estaba yo hablando con un cacique que era la primera vez que trataba de contarme sus hazañas.

A mi pregunta, que de donde era, me contestó de improviso:

«*Num-maitta-ntocq-Téüj-tocuéy* y con el brazo derecho, extendiendo y retirando lo apuntaba hácia el Norte.

Yo abro tamaños ojos y lo interrumpo:

Ntde-'hije?—¿Adonde?—Había entendido yo que quería hablarme de una población sobre el Teuco, que se llamaba Umaitá, como aquella del Paraguay en la desembocadura del Bermejo; y mi curiosidad al punto se exitó en grado superlativo con la idea de un descubrimiento etnográfico.

Lo que me había querido decir era esto:—«Yo-(nu)-*maté*, muchos en el Teuco lejos».

Nu ilon ntócq (yo he matado á muchos) . . . ; y en seguida empezó á contar en Mataco de uno hasta cuatro, encerrándose la mano derecha en la izquierda y largando uno á uno los dedos, menos el pulgar. Mas cuando llegó á cuatro ya no sabía que hacer, entonces como estaba en cuclillas, empieza con un dedo á hacer rayas paradas en el suelo, exclamando cada vez que hacia una, *Toj*, ó sea, «este», y de vez en cuando levantaba la cabeza y la mauo con el pulgar encerrado en la izquierda y mirándome agregaba:—*Uitd toj*, es decir, «y tambien esto», y así siguió hasta una veintena; mas siempre dándose vuelta para hacerme comprender que á más de aquello que marcaba estaban tambien los cuatro de la mano; hasta que al fin concluyó, casi cansado con *n:ocq ntocq* . . . . esto es—«muchos muchos».

Y era la verdad. Ese Cacique fué en un tiempo el azote de la frontera cristiana y el flagelo de sus enemigos Indios, hasta que al fin ya viejo y vapuleado por los Cristianos se dió de paz y consiguió que el Gobierno lo pusiese á ración, reduciéndose con toda su parcialidad, muy esquilmada ya, cerca del Fuerte de Gorriti, sobre la margen izquierda del Bermejo. Sucedio que cerca del Fuerte de Aguirre, sobre la derecha del Teuco, unos 50 kilómetros al noroeste de Gorriti otros Indios, que habían intentado una invasión, habian sido sorprendidos en su toldería, quedando parte muertos en el asalto y otros reducidos á prisión.

Estos últimos, atados todos con las manos atras, codo á codo, hasta formar un cordon de 30 á 40 individuos, fueron entregados al cacique para que los ultimase, y de hecho los despacho á lanzazos, casi todos con su propia mano. Mientras duró la matanza las más de las víctimas permanecian mudas; otros murmuraban como en las ceremonias de su religión: estos sín duda eran los hechiceros.

Yo pasé cinco años después por el campo de la tragedia; ya no ví ni vestigios de huesos de los cadáveres humanos que quedaron insepultos; las aguas de las crecientes se los habían llevado, y los vientos habían tapado lo demas. A duras penas con la ayuda de un soldado que había asistido á la tragedia pude reconocer tres calaveras haciendo escavaciones entre unos arbustos. El gobierno Nacional quiso castigar al oficial del piquete de la guarnición de Aguirre, y po-

sible es que lo haya hecho. Hay que convencerse empero que no hay compatibilidad posible entre los elementos civilizados y el salvaje; y toda la filantropía individual, todos los razonamientos *á priori* hechos desde lejos pierden cualquier valor práctico en el teatro de la lucha en que se produce el choque de las razas. A cada una de estas la destrucción de su contrario le parece el expediente más facil y más natural del mundo. Es pues inevitable el exterminio de los Pieles Rojas por los Cristianos por medio del hierro, del fuego, de la expatriación y dispersión en masa, como si se tratase de bestias.

Volviendo á los numerales, no hay que suponer, ni por broma, que estos Indios no comprendan que la cantidad de diez pescados sea la mitad de veinte. Tambien el perro, cuando se larga sobre un segundo hueso que se le arroja y gruñe porque otro intenta posesionarse del primero, tiene iguál percepcion. Sin embargo el hecho de no poseer una expresión adecuada revela, en mi concepto, insuficiencia de abstracción. Al desarrollo de la abstracción mental se debe tambien aquello de las formas del lenguaje, y la misma alteración de las palabras con respecto á sus sonidos de origen.

En cuanto á las expresiones de los Matacos para indicar los primeros cuatro números, á mi me sorprendía la extensión de aquellas y el movimiento de las manos que las acompañaba. Me parecía como si en cada una de ellas debería hallarse una frase entera que justificase los ademanes. Después de mucho tiempo creo no errar si las explico, y de no haberme equivocado en mi intinción.

En efecto: *uno* es *hoté-cuuaj 'hi* y se levanta un dedo: al mismo tiempo se puede decir también *hotejí* y *hotecoaji*. Ahora, *hoté* quiere decir, como, *cuudj* quiere decir, dedo, *hi (h nasal)* es partícula que indica posesión, vaso continente etc; entonces, sin preocuparnos de esa pequeña diferencia tan natural en toda lengua, y en especial en esta que experimenta tantas mudanzas, tendremos la traducción de *hotécuají* así:—«como *dedo tiene* (esto que muestro).

Dos se dice *hoté quuasi*, y se levantan dos dedos: *quuas* es plural de *cuoaj*, según esta lengua por decirlo, así; así que la traducción sería: *como dedos tiene*.

Tres se dice *laj tdi qua yél*, y se levantan tres dedos, quedando el otro; el meñique, apretado dentro de la izquierda. Ahora pues, *laj* significa lo que *sin* ó *no; el* quiere decir *otro; quai* está demasiado cerca del *quoají* así que no puede dejar lugar á dudas; tradúzcase pues *sin el otro dedo*. Lo propio sucede con *lája echecuoya* viudo sin esposo.

Cuatro es *tdi qualéss hiqui*: no sé como traducirlo literalmente, ni por lo tanto me lo permito; sin embargo en *qualéss* se advierte una forma plural en *iqui*, una palabra que suele acompañar á *hi*, y que

hallo en las frases en que tenemos la idea de *estar* y otras análogas: es probable pués que se refiera al ademan de la mano *de dos son*.

Los ademanes con las manos no sólo los hacía ese Cacique sino tambien otros Indios del riñon del Chaco, como lo mismo Faustino que sabía contar como cualquiera de nosotros. Alguna relación pués debe existir entre los ademanes y las palabras. Las etimologías que ofrezco según me parece, explican el caso más satisfactoriamente que las que en general suelen darse para casos análogos en la filología.

No se juzgue empero de la elegancia de la forma original por la traducción literal. ¿Cuanto le deben á la elegancia la mayor parte de las palabras compuestas, sí las traducimos al pié de la letra del Griego al Romance? Por ejemplo: *Panorama*, todo visto . . . !!

Y en cuanto al valor intelectual de este modo de expresar los numerales ¿no es su génesis lo más natural? También los Guaraníes se manejan por medio de un artificio análogo, al menos en cuanto á algunos de sus numerales, como ser «diez» ó «veinte» en lugar de los cuales dicen «dos manos» y «dos manos y dos pies». Y es probable que, si analizamos las etimologías de los numerales entre los otros Indios y demas naciones, hemos de hallar algo parecido á esto. Los números Romanos, que digamos ¿por fin no representan tantos dedos cuantos alcanzan á hacer *tres*, y una palma de mano el V, y una palma menos un dedo, el cuatro IV, y dos palmas sobrepuestas, con inversión de una, el diez X? Está claro que los números Romanos representan en las cifras lo que los jeroglíficos en la escritura, y lo que la expresión mataca en la lengua hablada.

Es de la naturaleza precisamente que el hombre debe haber derivado los primeros instrumentos para la expresión de sus necesidades, así como para el desarrollo de sus ideas.

XI

Pronombres y partículas pronominales (1)

a. Pronombres personales

Los pronombres personales que más se usan son los siguientes:

singular	plural
1. *Yo* —no-j-lam.	1. *Nosotros*—no-j-lam-il no-j-lam-ass (dual?).

(1) Capítulo intercalado.

2. *Tú* —ám, hám.	2. *Vosotros*—am-íl, y am-ass (dual?).
3. *Este*—tój.	3. *Estos*—toj-ess.

También hallo *inat, inend* é *innamdss* como pronombres de 1ª persona en plural.

b. Partículas pronominales

Estas partículas se prefijan á nombres y verbos, toda vez que la cosa ó la acción se refiere á personas; de donde resulta un uso tan frecuente, y en los diálogos inevitable, que casi no hay palabra á que no se arrimen; lo cual unido á las elisiones que sus vocales sufren al preceder á las otras de las voces que siguen, produce amenudo la ilusión de que forman parte radical del tema.

Estas partículas son como sigue en singular y plural, de nombres y verbas:

1ª. *Mi, Mis. Nuestro, Nuestros. Yo* y *Nos*—no, nu, ni, na.
2ª. *Tu, Tus, Vuestro, Vuestros. Tu* y *Vos*—a, ha.
3ª. *De aquel, de aquellos, Aquel. Aquellos*—lo, lu, le.

Fuera de estas partículas de relación suelen emplear otras también prefijadas á la raiz del tema, las cuales dan el valor en absoluto á la expresión, y estas son con más frecuencia la *t* y la *l*, amenudo *la*. Ex. gr. Llama de fuego—*itoj-cúdca;* Llama *(en general)—la-cúdca*; puerta del rancho—*huet-pé*; puerta *(en general) la-pé, hla-pé.*

c. Pronombres demostrativos

Este —Toj. y Toj-tzi, Toj-chí, y Toj-quí.	*Estos* —Toj ess y Toj-ess-tzí, Toj-ess-chi. y Toj-ess-quí.
Aquel—Toj-licné	*Aquellos*—Toj-ess-licné.
Ese —Toj-láni y Toj-léc tí.	*Esos* —Toj-ess.

En combinación, *toj* ó *toj-ess* precede. y *tzi* etc, *licné, láni* et, siguen al tema ó frase.

d. Pronombres interrogativos

¿Quién?—adhéj ó ádéj.
¿Qué? —atde ó hat dezu.

e. PRONOMBRES REFLEXIVOS

J-lam—subfijo.—*mismo*, el *met* de los Latinos, usado con pronombres personales; y que da origen al adverbio *j-lam-mej*—siempre.

XII

DEL VERBO

a. OBSERVACIONES GENERALES

La parte seria son los verbos. Confieso mi ignorancia, no me hallo en el caso de poder dar un infinitivo, un infinitivo, en una palabra, que pueda yo decir en conciencia que lo es en realidad. Podría suceder que, si tuviese el tiempo, llegase yo á cerciorarme de ello, más por ahora no estoy en ese caso. En obsequio empero á mi amor propio debo decir que la culpa no la tiene del todo la corta inteligencia mía, sino que en su mayor parte resulta de lo intrincado de esta dichosa lengua, y de la completa falta de toda idea, al menos intuitiva, de formas gramaticales por parte de mis intérpretes indios. Pregúnteseles, por ejemplo, como se dice «comer», y no saben responder, ó responden cada vez de distinto modo. Hay que preguntarles como se dice «quiero comer», y después «vamos á comer»; y así irle discurriendo á la cosa. Y ahora rómpase uno la cabeza con las dificultades del idioma. Porque *comer* unido á *querer* se expresa mediante una forma especial que incluye las dos ideas. Y así en lo demas.

Y después están las formas y modos de decir diferentes. Figúrese uno que, por ejemplo, «yo tengo» reproduzca la forma francesa *c'et á moi*, ó la latina que le corresponde *«id est mihi:* hay que correr el riesgo de tomar el *es* por *tengo*. Ahora pues parece que esta gente tiene algunos de estos modismos.

¿Y qué, si dijese que no he descubierto tampoco el plural de los verbos? Hay una partícula *en* ó *hen*, según la terminación de la palabra que la precede, que á no dudarlo expresa un plural; pero ignoro si es pronominal, ó más bien, si es una verdadera flexión del tema del verbo. Ejemplo, baila, *catin*; bailad *catinén*. Hasta aquí se andaría bien, si fuese siempre así; pero veamos: bailemos *inát-catin:* ya se acabó el *en*; el *inát* es nosotros. Mas he aquí que reaparece en un caso análogo. Ejemplo: toca, *hen qulé*, toquemos. *inénhequién:* aquí tenemos un montón de alteraciones por le eufonía y por la comodidad,

mas entre ellas facilmente se distingue en el fondo el *en* que no se veía en «bailemos». Y esto no sería nada, ello podría querer decir que fuesen dos formas del plural. El busilis está en esto, que, si combinamos el ejemplo con el sujeto y objeto parece que el *hen* ó *en* concuerda con el objeto, y no con el sujeto, con ser que el verbo no revela forma alguna de pasiva ó neutra, como en ciertos verbos latinos *videor*, *loquor* etc.

Ejemplo: mata la oveja, se dirá *l-lón tzonatáj;* Pedro ha matado la oveja, *Peiló ilón tzonatáj;* Pedro ha matado las ovejas, *Peiló ilonén tzonatáss.* ¿Dónde está ahora aquello que requería el *en* en *bailad, bailemos* etc.? Y de estas confusiones hallo yo por docenas.

Otro ejemplo desbarajustador: *ilóje* es curar, *iil* es enfermo: «los Indios están curando al enfermo», *Uicquiei ilojeje tojiil-nen.* ¿Hasta dónde alcanza la ley de incorporación en esta frase?

Por lo tanto lo que puedo decir del *en* y *hen*, es que las más de las veces se encuentra con un plural. Digo las más de las veces, porque no sucede en todos los casos así. Ejemplo: los cristianos han matado la oveja, se dirá: *Tsiguuéle ilon tzonatáj*. Parecería como si esta forma del plural en *en* no se usa para el verbo sino cuando es un plural el objeto que sufre la acción del mismo, ó cuando el sujeto plural es aquel sobre que recae dicha acción, como en *bailar*. Esto me hace vislumbrar que en la sintaxis de los verbos hay una revolución respecto á la nuestra: tal vez en algunos casos se les parezca la forma inglesa: «Y am told», «We are told» etc. por me han dicho, nos han dicho: forma analítica después de todo del neutro latin en *videor* etc.

b. De los tiempos

Del fárrago de los temas verbales que tengo á la vista me parece poder asegurar que esta lengua tiene muchas conjugaciones. Por este lado se aproximaría al guaraní, que tiene muchas, y se distanciaría leguas del Araucano, que sólo cuenta con una, y del Quichua que igualmente, por lo que me ha parecido, tiene una también, si bien ella es complicadísima en los tiempos compuestos.

De todo lo que precede, comprenderá el lector que no me es posible presentar uno ó más tipos de conjugación de los verbos porque no he sabido describirlos. Esto no obstante, tengo como dar algunas formas de siquiera algunos de los tiempos.

Una de las más precisas es la del futuro que se expresa con el presente y el aumento de la sílaba final *lá*. Ejemplo: vuelve, *tapil;* volverá, *tapil-lá*. Este sería el futuro absoluto porque hay tambien otro, á que daré el nombre de dubitativo, á que se arrima *pbiye* «tal vez», que se pone al fin del período. La forma en *lá* tambien sirve para

significar deber ú obligación de hacer alguna cosa, lo mismo que en nuestros idiomas.

Otra forma es la del pasado, que consiste en agregar al presente una *é* precedida de alguna letra que será la repetición de la última que figura en el presente; porque es la índole de esta lengua redoblar las letras como en la italiana y tantas otras, excepción hecha de la castellana. Ejemplo: llega, *yom;* ha llegado, *yommé.*

El pasado remoto empero se forma con el arrimo al presente del adverbio de tiempo *náji* ó *náje* con el cambio de la *n* por otra letra, y sobre todo por *l*, si le suena bien al oido. Ejemplo: mata-*ilóm;* mató (remoto), *ilonnaje.* A veces se deja sólo *aje.* Ejemplo: come *théuccue;* comió, *théu quáje.*

Otro modo del pasado inmediato, casi imperfecto, parece que se forma con el arrimo de *nenna* que emplean, ó íntegro ó reducido á una de sus dos sílabas, según el gusto de cada uno.

Estas dos palabras *náje* y *nénná* son las mismas que hemos de ver usadas en la voz «ayer» *icuala-náje* y «hoy» *icuala-nenná:* véase si son lógicos estos salvajes; y estas como el *lá* de futuro, se destacan del tema verbal para dejar lugar á algún infijo cualquiera que sea, sin excluir frase entera.

c. De la flección personal

Parecería de los ejemplos citados arriba como si careciesen de las terminaciones verbales que dependen de las personas, si bien la tenían más ó menos de número, mediante el subfijo *en.* Sin embargo, sea por diferencia casual de pronunciación, sea intencional en razón de persona, hallo la *e* trocada en *i* para la primera persona del tiempo pasado en los siguientes ejemplos: llegué, *yammi;* volví, *tapini;* comí (pasado remoto), *tdeucquáji.* Por lo demás no les hace falta en resumidas cuentas, en razón de que á cada tema verbal prefijan las partículas prenominantes *nu, a, lo, inat,* yo, tú, él, nosotros, etc., con ciertas mudanzas, como ser: *no* y *ni, lu* y *ll, inné* y no me acuerdo que más.

En los temas negativos empero, que se forman con el subfijo *tde,* nó-casi parecería como si la palabra tomase la forma de una flección; mas ello debe atribuirse al sólo objeto de la eufonía. Ejemplo: veo, *nu huenn,* no veo, nu-*huenni-tdé,* en lugar de *nuhenntdé;* corto, *nu isset* ó *nissét,* no corto, *nu yissti tdé,* en lugar de *nuissetde;* ¿está muerto?—*yáj iil?* no está muerto, *yini tdé,* en vez de *yill tdé.*

No entro en otros detalles porque me vería en la necesidad de enredarme continuamente en formas acerca de las que no se sabe el porqué de su diferencias: y tantas más son las diferencias cuanto más

complejas son las relaciones de que se trata. Tomemos un sólo ejemplo de los más elementales. ¿Regresó el Cacique (el mío)? *Yaj tapil -le nucaunid?* No volvió-*Tapini-tdé.* En este ejemplo tan sencillo ¿porqué una vez tenemos el *le*, y otra el *ni?* Aquí el interrogativo no tiene que ver más que al principio con el *yaj*. Está claro para mi que estos cambios son el resultado de los caprichos del oido, y entreveo que *tapil-lé* es sustitución, por causa del *nu* siguiente de *tapilné*, sincopación á su vez de *tapil-nennd*; lo mismo *tapi ni*. Ahora *ab uno disce omnes.*

d. De los verbos reflexivos

Algunos de los verbos reflexivos parece que los forman con el arrimo de *j-lam* al tema activo. Por ejemplo: Pedro se mató-se dirá *Péiló tilonne j-lam.* Este *j-lam* sería el *met* de los latinos y el *mismo* nuestro. Entonces el pronombre personal *nojlam* podria ser *ego met*, yo mismo, cosa que lo armonizaria mejor con los demas temas pronominales. Advierto que al citar Latin aquí y en otras partes, ni pretendo. ni he pretendido, establecer analogía, alguna; sólo lo hago por facilitar la demostración.

e De los temas verbales en general

Es digno de notarse como conservan una raiz comun ciertos verbos de sentido modificado. Ejemplo: andar *opil*, volver-*tapil;* venir: *nom.* llegar *yom;* morir *iil*, matar, *ilón;* gritar llamar, decir, *ohn; hon*, hablar, *hon-quié*, esto es, «decir con», así como nosotros decimos «conversar»; con lo que hacen ver agudeza y lógica, según á mi me parece. Estas expresiones podrian darnos la clave del valor modificante de algunas partículas, de que se sacaría partido en obsequio de la filosofia de la lengua. como en h*on-quié* y de la filología comparada, como en *ta-pil,* en que *t* representa repetición de una acción, como lo es en realidad volver sobre lo andado, y se encuentra en este sentido tambien en la lengua Araucana: dígase que en as nuestras también, v. gr. agitar, de *agere, seguitare* italiano, *seguir* español, y decenas de otros.

Las posposiciones empero son el gran instrumento para la fabricación de los verbos. Ya dimos más allá los ejemplos de *tol-l-cá* venir de, *tol-l-pé*, caer de, *tol-l-equiote*, caer en, que todos se derivan de *tol-l*, voz de movimiento. Y estoy seguro que, según esta regla si yo digo *toll-quié (quié* igual á *con* de compañia) por decir, *acompañar* me comprenderían estos Indios. Otros ejemplos: Pedro se muere de hambre *Péilo il-lej nainló; ej*-con instrumental. Y para que no se

crea que *ej* en este caso sea una preposición de *nainló* hambre, vease este otro ejemplo: Los Indios se mueren de hambre. *Uicquii vil ej-i-én naînló*, esto es, *ville-ej-én*, en que *ej* precede á *en*, subfijo del plural de verbo: desde luego está ligado, y subfijado á este último, y no prefijado al sustantivo; no es pues una «preposición», como lo diremos cuando tratemos de esta «parte de la oración».

El uso en esta forma de las posposiciones, con más las alteraciones de que tantas veces nos hemos quejado, no es la menor de las causas que producen la confusión y la embrolla en el estudio de los verbos. Y en efecto ¿qué acciones se sustraen á la posibilidad de ser expresadas por un verbo que exprima la idea madre y por una particula pospositiva que le asigne la relación? A fé que bien pocos. Y bien pocas pues serán las palabras que no tengan una ú otra de estas cuñas disfrazadas, y que ora brotan por un lado, ora por otro, con diferente aspecto, según las exigencias del oído, con completa inciencia del que oye, que queda sorprendido y aturdido con ciertos cambios inexplicables.

Una forma verbal para las acciones que incluyen la idea de posesión es aquella de arrimar un *yá* á la voz que expresa la cosa que se posée. Ejemplo: mujer *chiecua*, tener mujer *chiecuaya*; miedo *hudi'* tener miedo *hudiya*. Otra forma: de *loss* hijo, *lo lessen* tener hijos; de *lo-sé* y *le-ctzá* hija, *lolessás* tener hijas; de *quiilaj* hermano, *quiilaliss* tener hermanos.

Al verbo «ser» lo callan. Ejemplo: Yo soy feo, *nu-tzi-tdé:* esto es, yo lindo nó.

d. Ejemplo concreto de la flección, verbal

Concluyo el tema aburridísimo de los verbos, lo ha sido para mí ¡qué no será para el lector! con hacer la tentativa de forjar un tipo de conjugación del indicativo de un verbo. No garanto los detalles, y se sabe el porqué; que sí, bastará para reasumir las ideas.

VERBO *Ilón*—MATAR

TIEMPO PRESENTE

MODO INDICATIVO		PASADO REMOTO	
Sing. 1	*Mato*—nu-ilón.	1	*Maté*—nu-ilon-náje.
2	*Matos*—há-ilon.	2	*Mataste*—há-ilon-náje.
3	*Mata*—l -ilón.	3	*Mató*—l -ilon-náje.
	ó t -ilón.		t -ilon-náje.

Plur. 1	*Matamos*—inat-ilón-én	1	*Matamos*— inat-ilonnajién.
2	*Matais*— há-ilon-en	2	*Matasteis*— ha-ilonnajién.
3	*Matan*—tojéss-ilon-én	3	*Mataron*—tojéss-ilonnajién.

IMPERFECTO

Mataba, as, a, nu-ha, l ilonnénna. *Matabamos* etc-inat, ha, tojéss-ilonnénnahén.

PASADO INMEDIATO

He, has, ha matado nu, ha, le-ilonné. *Hemos, habéis, han matado* inat, ha, tojéss-ilonnehén

FUTURO

Mataré etc-nu, ha, l ilon-lá. *Mataremos etc*-inát. ha, tojéss ilon-lá-hen.

IMPERATIVO

Mata—l-lon:

Adviértase que la forma remota con *náje* muy rara vez se usa, y, aun menos, aquella con *nennd*.

¿Tiene esta gente formas pasivas en los verbos? No sabré decirlo. No obstante he notado que muchos de los pasivos formulados en nuestros romances, se sustituyen con un giro que los reduce á la forma activa, ó por lo menos intransitiva.

Por ejemplo: en lugar de Pablo fué matado por Plinio, se dirá: Plinio murió por causa de Pablo, ó de nó, Plinio mató á Pablo.

No me parece que á fin de cuentas esto constituya una inferioridad.

No sea que el ejemplo de conjugación presentado nos haga creer en la sencillez de los verbos en esta lengua. Es justamente porque sucede lo contrario que yo no me hallo en aptitud de dar otros modos y otros tiempos, los cuales me resultan tan complicados que hasta ahora no he sabido darme cuenta de sus reglas.

CAPÍTULO XIII

DEL ADVERBIO

Adverbios hay un montón pero se distinguen los de tiempo por la lógica con que son formados, y por la analogía con el procedimiento de que nos valemos nosotros, por ejemplo: día se dice *icudla*, esto es, «sol», *un sol*, como «mes» se dice *igüeldj*, esto es «luna»; *tem-ló*

quiere decir al lado; *náje, náji* ó *naj* quieren decir «pasado» y también «después», en el sentido de tiempo atrás; *nenna* y *ná* quieren decir «presente, ahora». Pues bien, «hoy» se dice así: *icudlannd*, esto es, «sol presente»; mañana se dica *icudla* y *quiicudla*, por la misma razón que en castellano *mañana* quiere decir «la mañana» y «el día de mañana»; «ayer» se dice *icudlannáje*, esto es, «el sol pasado»; «anteayer» se dice *icudla el-láje*, esto es, «el otro sol pasado; como que *el* significa «otro», y *láje* lo mismo que *náje*; debiéndose el cambio á un sentimiento de armonía y á costumbre de la lengua; «pasado mañana» se dice *tem-lo icudla*, esto es «al lado de mañana». Curiosa cosa es que *tem-ló* se prefije á *icudla* para expresar un día después, y que *náje* se subfije para expresar un día antes. Caprichos del idioma parecerán, pero que sin embargo deben encerrar alguna razón etímológica, por no decir filosófica, que préside en su colación.

Lo que además me llama la atención es esto: en lugar de «noche» usan la voz que significa «tierra» esto es *hunát hunná*, así como en lugar de «día» se valen de la palabra «sol»: como si hubiesen tenido la intención de oponer la una al otro; y no es difícil que esta contraposición responda á una especie de filosofía en que la tierra y el sol representan dos principios opuestos, las tinieblas y la luz, el bien y el mal. Yo sin embargo no he podido darme cuenta de filosofía tal en su ideología, aun cuando algo materializado asi se encuentre en la religión de ellos, como hemos tenido ocasión de ver más atrás.

¿Y esto de tomar el sol, la luz, para expresar la idea de tiempo no nos presenta un acercamiento intelectual al Aryano, que del Sánscrito *dyu*, esto es *luz*, pasa al latin *dies*, al castellano *día*, al italiano *di* que quieren decir *día* y *jornada?*

Entre tanto, para decir «esta tarde» usan *hunná* y *quid-hunná*, y para «anoche», *hunná-tzi-nná*, guardando analogía con la forma usada y con el orden seguido en la distribución de las palabras para decir «hoy», «mañana», etc.

Fuera de esto para expresar «cielo» dicen *ppe-lé*, que debe traducirse «lo de arriba», de *ppé*, arriba, y *lé*, contracción de *lél-lé* ó *c-lel-lé*, que es palabra patronímica, que sirve para expresar el origen, provenencia, patria, etc.

Se dice que los salvajes no tienen ideas abstractas: mas yo pregunto ahora? es ó no abstracta la idea de *siempre* ó de *nunca?* Sin esperar la respuesta digo que esta gente de que se trata tienen la palabra *inne-mid* para expresar «nunca», y *c-lam-mej* para decir «siempre», que derivan respectivamente de *innem* más, italiano *mai*, latin *umquam*, y *d* negativo; y de *j-lam* mismo y *ej* posposición.

Podrá objetarse que estas son espresiones compuestas de palabras que significan por si algo limitado; está bien. Los franceses empero

dicen *toujours*, todos los días, en sentido de *siempre*: expresan pues una idea indefinida, más aún, infinita, con el uso de una palabra que significa cosa limitada, como lo es día. Es que la abstracción no está en las palabras, está en la intención. ¿Qué deberíamos decir, á no ser así, del inglés *always?*

Aprovecho la ocasión para hacer notar que la partícula *naje* y *nennâ*, esta última cercenada ya de la segunda, ya de la primera sílaba, y con mudanza de *i* en *e*, forman dos tiempos de los verbos: la primera, esto es *naje*, sirve para el pasado remoto, la otra para, el pasado inmediato. Por ejemplo: volver es *tapil*: volvió *tapil láje*; ha vuelto, *tapil-lé* (la segunda *l* en ambos ejemplos es lo mismo que *n*, en razón de lo que se dijo arriba á propósito de icuála-el-láje).

En lugar de «medio día» dicen *icuála icni*, que para mí es, sol alto, arriba; y para expresar «medianoche» dicen, *hunnat-quiú-nej*, que para mi sería, tierra abajo. Por «es temprano» dicen *inatáj*; y por «es tarde», *hunáj*.

Tienen una sílaba *tde*, ó *dthé*, ó *ntdé*, que es la base de un gran número de adverbios de lugar y de tiempo. Por ejemplo: ¿porqué? *atdyécque*, ¿dónde? *tdené*, ¿de dónde? *dtel che*, ¿como? *atde-tzú*, ¿cuánto? *tde-'hoté*, ¿cuándo? *tdé-naj-hote*. *Hoté* sólo quiere decir, como; y aquel *naj* expresa que la pregunta se refiere á un tiempo algo remoto. Adviértase, que donde preceda una *a* esta probablemente se referirá á *tú*, debido á la circunstancia de que la pregunta se hacía en segunda persona. Esto demuestra lo necesario que es fijarse en las circunstancias del tiempo y de la persona á que se refieren las preguntas al escribir las respuestas.

Temo cansar al lector si sigo con este emplasto del Mataco: por otra parte no sé como dejar de manifestar aquel poco que de él he aprendido y juntado aprovechándome de los ratos de tiempo que mis quehaceres profesionales dejan á mi libre disposición, con tal que me conforme á aprovechar altas horas de la noche. Y para no cansarlo, si entro en digresiones, temo extenderme demasiado, si apunto derecho, temo ser demasiado árido. . . . , Decididamente me encuentro sin saber á que lado ladearme. ¿Quién hay que me sugiera alguna idea para salir del atolladero? . . . .¿No hay quien? Luego nos quedamos allí. Pero entónces, o lector mío, si es que aún tengo á quien llamar, así, sé benévolo conmigo y con mi poco afortunado trabajo. Te lo ruego por el amor que yo te profeso, y por aquel que de tu parte espero. . . . . por aquellas horas que he robado á Morfeo pensando en ti, mientras trataba de desenredar la intrincadísima madeja Mataca, virgen hasta ahora; ruégote hasta por la burla que siento caerme encima al parecer que yo descuido las exactas raíces de la matemática por aquellas otras dudosas de la filología. . . . porque al fin, creeme, algún prove-

cho es posible que se saque para cuando quieras elevarte al estudio de un poco de historia pre-histórica de esta gente hallada aquí en Sud-América: por cuanto con la lucecilla de la filología bien podremos intentar el descubrimiento de si estos Pieles-Rojas fueron tan hermanos entre ellos como á lo menos nosotros lo somos con los Croatos. Y si todo esto no te basta . . . . *miserere mei.*

XIV

DE LAS PREPOSICIONES

Las preposiciones en esta como en las demás lenguas forman en gran parte la base, y, por decirlo así la filosofía de la lengua. Arrimadas á un verbo le atribuyen un sentido en relación. Ellas sin embargo son tan poco claras, tan poco fijas, que no mucho antes de escribir estas reglas me había parecido, maravillándome á la vez de ello, que en este idioma fuese corto el número ellas. En esto sucede lo contrario de lo que tenemos en el idioma Quichua, en que las preposiones son hermosas, destacadas, claras, siempre en el mismo lugar, esto es, pospuestas á su régimen, como que por lo mismo deberían llamarse más bien *posposiciones.*

También en el Mataco las *preposiciones* son *posposiciones*, pero algunas veces, en lugar de estar después del sustantivo, estan después del verbo, y entonces se toman equivocadamente por una forma de conjugación como sucedió conmigo: otras veces están entre la raiz del verbo (si se nos permite la expresión) y la flección que fija el tiempo, ó entre la raiz del sustantivo y la terminación que indica el plural ó un caso. Se puede comprender la horrible confusión que le causa al que da con un monton de expresiones pertenecientes á una lengua del todo nueva y estraña, en que una misma palabra parece que cambia de frase á frase sin sombra de razon. Yo por mi parte confieso que durante mucho tiempo no alcanzé á comprenderlo, y aún ahora reconozco que no he sorprendido sino muy pocas de las reglas que están ocultas en los centenares de frases que poseo.

Por ejemplo: *cue* equivale á «con»: «nosotros» es, en forma abreviada, *nu hén;* «con nosotros» sería *nu cue hén.*

A buen seguro que no sería dificil la cosa si á un Indio se le pudiese preguntar una palabra aislada, y el supiese responder así en absoluto; pero el Indio, las más de las veces, tiene necesidad de referir la palabra siempre á alguna cosa. Así, preguntándole tú como se dice «pié», responde él *nuccoló,* si toca el suyo propio; *accolo,* sí toca el tuyo; *toccoló,* si es el de de tercero. Despues está la diferencia de

construcción que embrolla. Por ejemplo: en el caso de *nuccuenen*. si se pregunta al lenguaraz cuál sea la voz que dice «con» y cuál la que dice «nosotros», si es *ladino*, inteligente y enterado de la lengua, contestará con toda ingenuidad: *nuc* es «con», cuehen es «nosotros», precisamente al revéz todo.

De ello resulta que no hay más remedio que seguir paso á paso, y de lo conocido á lo desconocido, preguntando en primer lugar por palabras sueltas, después por frases sencillas y claras; después por otras menos sencillas, pero siempre claras; y más tarde, repitiendo la misma frase con mudanza de una sola palabra ó de alguna de sus partes. Así comparando, tendremos probabilidad de llegar, por eliminación, á entresacar la traducción palabra por palabra. Y con todo no basta; porque por las cualidades que he apuntado de la lengua, por la gran distancia intelectual que media entre los dos interlocutores, y por el diferente punto de vista en que se colocan por ignorancia recíproca, el infeliz discípulo se encuentra de improviso con la mismísima palabra cambiada, sin saberse porqué, ni de cómo, y con más. la duda acerca de cual será la buena. Héteme aquí el discípulo que redobla las preguntas y que redobla la confusión, hasta que concluye por producir una verdadera Babél . . . .

A propósito de Babél: los indios Vielas para decir «habla» usan la voz *mbabelon*.

En fin volvamos á nuestras preposiciones. Suele decirse que estas modifican el sentido de los verbos, pero sería mas propio decir que lo complementan. Por ejemplo: *Tol-l* encierra la idea de movimiento. Usado sólo puede que diga «brotar»: «la yerba brota» se expresará así, yerba *tol-l*, con aumento de *ca* al fin sería «venir de» y con *ppé*, «caer». No faltan otras dicciones para expresar la misma cosa; sin embargo si queremos decirlo con *tol-l* habrá que arrimar las partículas estas, que se usan como posposiciones también con los sustantivos.

Podría creerse que, cuando se subfijan á los verbos, en realidad sean prefijos del caso régimen; pero á pesar de que no faltan algunas preposiciones que lo son en todo el sentido de la palabra, no obstante en el caso citado son posposiciones aún con los verbos, porque modifican la terminación de estos para acomodar su sonido, y porque el verbo así modificado puede usarse sólo, y porque entre él (con su posposición) y el caso régimen se pueden intercalar otras palabras: lo que demuestra que la posposición va ligada con el verbo.

Las principales partículas, ó al menos las que yo tengo por tales. que hacen las veces de nuestras preposiciones, serían; *eckiá*, hasta; *tamennej*, por causa de; *appé*. *pé* ó *ppé*, encima; (h) *icquió*, abajo, *cue*, *quié*, *ycque*, *ecqué*. *éj*. con; (estas probablemente son una y la misma modificadas en razon de la eufonía); *uuith*, *uuild*, y *c-loya*, que quie-

ren decir «con» que se prefijan, y que más bien son conjunciones copulativas; *op*, *ob*, *hot*, *hlot*, por; estas sólo las he hallado en el sentido de «porque» por ejemplo: *op-toj* porque (por esto); *op-qui-lá*, ¿para qué? mientras que para preguntar ¿porqué? se dice, *atddeyéque?* que se compone de *atde*, qué, cómo, y de *yécque*, con. Ahí está también una posposición *ei* que es como el *da* del italiano y *ches* del francés, que por eso se usa del movimiento *á* ó *de* un lugar, que con frecuencia se omite y que se coloca de diversos modos. Este *ei* ó *iei* forma una elegantísima expresión verbal que es *miei*, «ve por», compuesta de *móh* ó *mmóh*, que significa «ve» y de *ei*, con una de las tantísimas mudanzas que se estilan en esta lengua, y que á mi me servían de desesperación: así en vez de, anda tráeme fuego (*itój*) se dice, *miéi-itój*, esto es, «ve por fuego», como con elegancia se usa también entre nosotros con el verbo *andar*. Al principio, y aún después, por mucho tiempo la había tomado por una flección.

Otra posposición importante es *ca*, que quiere decir «de», (genitivo y hablativo) y se subfija á verbos y sustantivos. Con estos forma una especie de genitivo, que sólo raras veces encuentro que se use y eso únicamente con nombres propios: y con los pronombres personales forma los posesivos *mio*, *tuyo*, *suyo*, que en esta lengua resultan ser un genitivo, si se puede decir así, y siguen la misma regla del italiano, en que tán se puede decir *mio* como *de mi*. Así de *nu* (forma sincopada de *nojlam* yo) se hace *nujcá*, mio; *ah-cá*, tuyo; *luh-cá*, suyo, de él.

Hay otras posposiciones más: *cqúi*, dentro; *lája*, que quiere decir «sin» y que se prefija; pero esta más bien es negativa, porque no la encuentro prefijada sino á palabras que terminan de una manera que expresa posesión negada en mérito del *laja*. Por ejemplo, sin mujer, se dice, *lája chequó yá*, esto es, no casado.

Y son tantas las otras que no recuerdo.

Las palabras que expresan el *con* (*ecq*, *yc-que*) me hacen pensar que algunas posposiciones rigen ciertos casos y que á la diferente terminación de estos deben su aparente alteración. Por ejemplo, «me» es *nuya*; «conmigo» es *nuyécque:* es facil desprender de esta una mudanza, racional de *nuya yécque*. Y ¿no sucede lo mismo en la lengua italiana cuando en vez de *con lo*, *con la*, *con li* se dice, *col-lo*, *col-la*, *col-li* y en vez de *di-lo*, *di-la* decimos *del-lo*, *del-la?*

Continuando con las preposiciones, no extrañe el lector al ver que en el mataco se coloquen al revés de como las colocamos nosotros: al contrario, más bien se maraville del uso nuestro, porque esto de subfijar las partículas que nosotros prefijamos debe considerarse como un carácter que en un tiempo fué tal vez universal.

En efecto, en el alemán y en el inglés, pero sobre todo en el pri-

mero, la trasposición de las preposiciones es de lo más frecuente, como que ello constituye uno de los elementos que más contribuyen á la elegancia de la lengua, y á hacerla difícil de aprender y de hablar para el que habla una de las llamadas hermanas latinas. Al menos yo hallo allí el escollo, prescindiendo de la desemejanza de los vocablos.

En el latín tenemos ejemplos de trasposición de las preposiciones en *nobiscum*, *vobiscum*, *tecum*, *mecum* y en el empleo indiferente de algunas como *versus*, pudiéndose decir: "voy *Romam versus* y *versus Romam*." Y tal uso se extiende hasta las conjunciones, por el cual puedo decir "Senatus atque Populus Romanus" ó "Senatus Populusque Romanus" que ha quedado el famoso lema de Roma. En Italiano tenemos *meco* y *teco* al que corresponde el pleonasmo español *con-migo* y *con-tigo*.

Los ejemplos que acabo de citar pueden en mi opinión considerarse como restos de una forma preexistente.

En los idiomas indígenas sud americanos las posposiciones en lugar de preposiciones están á la orden del día, y lo contrario es la excepción, al menos en el quíchua y en el guaraní, que sólo tienen posposiciones, y en el araucano que se vale de las dos formas: ahora estos, con los Matacos é indiadas salvajes del Chaco y del Centro, ocupan toda la América Meridional.

Y ¿no podría ser que esta forma fuese más oportuna que la usada por nosotros para apurar la percepción de las ideas, fijando desde ya los términos sobre que debe caer la relación expresada por la partícula? Por cierto que una de estas partículas no retarda mucho el apercibimiento de la relación entre los términos á que se refiere, sin embargo, si nos remontamos á la época de la formación del idioma ó de los idiomas ¿no podrá parecernos más natural fijar de antemano los objetos y recién después expresar la relación entre ellos? Creo que si, tanto más desde que se puede pensar que el símbolo fonético que y expresa una relación debería haber venido posteriormente, con el progreso de la inteligencia y, sobre todo, con la práctica en el uso del instrumento hasta aquel entónces adoptado, ayudándose al principio con una convención respecto á la colocación de las palabras y su modulación, ó de cualquier otra manera.

En este orden de ideas la preposición apuntaría á una posterioridad, comparada con la posposición, en el génesis del lenguaje; y la posposición, otra posterioridad, en cuanto á la modulación. No obstante las lenguas modernas usan todavía la convención y la modulación para distinguir las relaciones.

En efecto, cuando yo digo: "el perro mata el tigre," es para mi una convención, inconsciente por el uso, que yo entienda quien es el que

mata y quien el muerto. Y cuando pregunto: ¿Mata el tigre el perro? es por la misma convención, y por la entonación, que se entenderá si es el perro ó es el tigre que yo pregunto sea el que mata. La declinación de las palabras, aunque complica las formas gramaticales ayuda mucho á la claridad; y en esto el castellano, que distingue el acusativo con la preposición *á* (tratándose de personas) está adelante de los que no usan este distintivo; como el francés en el relativo *qui* nominativo, y *que*, acusativo.

¿Son la entonación y la convención un progreso absoluto, y sobre todo, es un procedimiento anterior ó posterior al de la declinación, y al de la prefijación de estas partículas prepositivas á los sustantivos? Una discusión nos conduciría lejos. Yo me limito á afirmar, que la lengua que á la vez de ser igualmente expresiva es la más sencilla, en mi concepto es la mejor, y que por otra parte, ciertas formas individualizadoras, necesarias para una mente, por decirlo así, material, tienen que haber cedido el puesto á formas más sencillas que derivan, fuerza de la posición relativa de las palabras, una vez que la mente se haya hecho más capaz para la percepción de relación, para la abstracción, para la síntesis.

Entre tanto una lengua que se caracteriza por aquello de materializar con símbolos á propósito lo que nosotros expresamos con la posición relativa y con la entonación, es la quíchua, en que tenemos la declinación de los nombres y la subfijación de partículas postizas para el interrogativo, las cuales son *chu* al final de un verbo, y *taj* de un nombre.

Ejemplo: "¿Quieres?" se dice *¿munánqui?*—"agua" (acusativo) *yacuta*; si se pregunta "¿quieres agua?" se dirá: *munanquichu yacuta*; "te llamas" es: *sutiqui*, y "como—*ima*, para preguntar pues, "¿cómo te llamas?" se dirá: *Imataj sutiiqui:* ahorrándose así una entonación, ó un signo caligráfico, si se escribe.

Adviértase que la quichua subfija todas sus partículas, conjunciones, preposiciones, interrogaciones, declinaciones. Esto la constituye en lengua excepcionalmente típica.

CAPÍTULO XV

DE LAS CONJUNCIONES

No he encontrado conjunción disyuntiva, esto es, *ó*, *ni*, etc. En lugar de *ó* parece que emplean *si-no*, y en lugar del *ni* repetirían el verbo. Por ejemplo: *Dame aguá, si no hay vino*, en vez de decir: *Dame*

agua ó vino. Así también: *no tengo agua, no tengo vino,* en vez de *No tengo agua ni vino.*

Por el contrario, tienen muchas palabras para expresar la conjunción copulativa, *y, también* etc., que ellos prefijan, como lo hacemos nosotros, á su régimen. Las principales son, según me parece, *uuith,* ó *uuitd* y *c-loya,* que emplean también por nuestro *con,* como se ha visto ya: y á más: *utcuei, isiqiei, tdéui* que son nuestro.

El *tdéui* noto que lo usan especialmente en las frases interrogativas, por ejemplo: "Yo me voy, ¿y tú?—*Nu-ycque, tdeui am?* Tienen la conjunción condicional *si* en la palabra *quiá* ó *cquiá.* Cuando se antepone la proposición condicional á la principal esta última se liga con *uuitd,* así como se usa el *so* después del *wenn* en alemán, ó del *cosi* en italiano, por ejemplo: "Si no quieres avísame" *cquiá*—no quieres, *uuitd* —avísame.

XVI

(CONCLUSIÓN)

Y aquí pongo punto final por ahora y me despido del lector. A este le deseo que, como resultado práctico, si bien indirecto, de este estudio, aún cuando lo haya seguido á trechos y bocados, se le haya imbuido la comvicción que el hombre, en el momento actual de su vida, es potencialmente el mismo en todas las partes de la tierra. En efecto lo vemos manejar con singular maestría el complicado instrumento del lenguaje, y revelarse mediante esto, poseedor de todos los criterios que responden á un desarrollo intelectual capaz de formar, dadas las circunstancias favorables, la sociedad civil como la entendemos hoy.

Si los indios de hoy son rebeldes á la sociedad civil lo son individualmente por los hábitos contraidos durante la vida de cada individuo de ellos; esto no obstante la aptitud *natural* la tienen: la prueba está en las criaturas de ellos que se han introducido al ambiente nuestro, los que se desarrollan con aptitudes en todo punto equivalentes á las que nosotros poseemos: todo esto puede haberlo comprendido el que haya vivido en medio de estos salvajes.

Mas no por esto pretendo yo negar los efectos de la herencia, ni aceptar que el hombre haya nacido de punta á cabo armado de las facultades y de los medios que posee, como se cuenta de la famosa Minerva. Todo lo contrario de esto; pero quiero decir que en la serie de evoluciones porque ha pasado el hombre hasta llegar al punto actual, la así llamada civilización representa un átomo inapreciable, ya

sea por el poco tiempo (pocos miles de años) desde que apareció y se estableció en algunas partes del mundo. ya sea por lo limitado de los individuos y de las nacioncs que han disfrutado de ella.

Se sigue también de ello que aún bajo este punto de vista. el origen del hombre lo vemos remontar allá donde nos lo indican el estudio de los fósiles y de la tierra, es decir, una época distante de nosotros más años que días contamos desde el Adan del Génesis.

«Nota:—El material que se contiene en los anteriores capítulos se ha entresacado de la obra «Otto Mesi», en que se hallaba diseminado en el orden en que se presentaba la observación al viagero en sus peregrinaciones: muy propio del que marcha con la cartera de apuntes en mano y reproduce fielmente las impresiones del momento. Esto empero no convenía en un trabajo de la naturaleza del presente, por muchos motivos, entre los cuales primaba el de la facilidad de referencia. Por poco que se ajusten las lenguas indígenas á las reglas de *sum, es, fui*, conviene siempre reducirlas á la forma de arte ó gramática á que estamos habituados. Al fin todo es convencional en estas cosas; porque, no siendo un caso como el del Volapuk, primero se habló toda lengua, después se escribió, y allá á las perdieas recién se redujo á arte ó gramática.

El capítulo intercalado sobre los pronombres se reduce á concretar en una forma cómoda observaciones sueltas de los varios capítulos. La importancia de esta «parte de la oración», sí es permitido expresarse así, hablando del idioma mataco, obliga á dedicarle un capítulo aparte, por corto y aun poco satisfactorio que sea, en vista de que es lo más difícil para todo colector de vocabularios. A esto se debían las desconfianzas del autor, y la falta de un capítulo especial en el original de este ensayo, falta que se subsana aquí.—*El Editor.*»

PARTE TERCERA

VOCABULARIOS

ESPAÑOL-MATACO

— Y —

MATACO-ESPAÑOL

FRASES Y RELACIONES

CLAVE

Chin. — Indio de Rivadavia.
Alf. — Alferez de Rivadavia.
P. — Pedro, Mataco del Fuerte Güemes.
F. — Faustino, Desertor en la Cangayé.
M. — Maltej Capitanejo en la Cangayé.
Mº — Mulato, Cacique en la Cangayé.
T. — Tajo, Indio militar, bautizado, intérprete.
M. H. — Hijos de Mulato.
I. R. — Indio de Rivadavia.
(?) — En duda.
'h — H nasál.
'j — J nasal.
ph. — P con J suave.
ˋ — Grave, corta el sonido.
ʌ — Alarga ó diptonga el sonido.

A

Abajo (para)—hiquió; **Voy para abajo**—Nu-i'huj hiquió. T.
Abajeños—icquiôm-lc-lêi.
Abanico de palma—cutzûc—**el abanico, ó la palma, ó la hoja.** M.
Abeja—pan-nê-tdê. T.
Abispa (Lechiguana)—nu-al-lécque hûû. T.
Abispa (Carán)—tic-lá-hûu. T. **(Madre del Carán).**
Abuela—notajóti. P.
Abuelito—nochóti— no-catêla. P. Ver: **viejo.**
Acá—caná.
Acabarse, se ha acabado—núhj. T.
Acarrear leña—hotnan nei ahloi. Ver: **leña.**
Acordarse de un muerto—nojalétha (*th* casi inglesa.)
Acto sexual—copulam hábere-hualé, F; hualej T.
Achera—cu-iél-la, T; quiél-laj, F. Quiel-lóc, tal vez de **locque**—comida, raíz que comen.
Adentro—nahí? Quió.
Adentro del rancho—hep-quió. T.
Adios, ya me voy—Uitd, amájecná nuyicq. T.
Admirar—vemhihn.
Adonde—e'hije. F. Ver: **Estar.**
¿Adonde vas?—téc'-là'hû'he? T.
¿Adonde te duele?—eyje tojoitaj, F. (?)tél-la. **Adónde vas?**—*Tél-la 'hu'he*
Adverbio—najj—**de tiempo algo remoto.**
Afuera—ajlú
Agarrar, agarra, te voy á dar—Quiem lo nigüen ahmu. F y T; **agárralo esto**—quiematoja húe, F; quiem-ló toja, T—**Voz de** *güen ó huen.*
Agosto—inaguup (tiempo en que (brotan las flores. T.) Ver: **Primavera.** F.
Agua—esta agua es para tí—inotlatzi hót'am.
Agua—inót. P.
Agua y Rio—guañanga ó guayanga.
Agua, no te eches al agua—iahuho inót;yaj môhi inót.'*h* nasal—**no te eches agua**—yajtzói a-taphé inot.
Aguja—canó, hanót. P; nucanú, M; canú. F.
Ahora—néqu'at. T; nécquie.
Ahogar—hiquiá. T.
Ají—phó-nón. T.
Ala—lacuiss. F; jléuhj M°. H.—**era de un chimango**—jle'ju-is—**plumas,** T.—hléjù'pl'hlí-huuiss, T.
Alcahuete—hassé-huu, T.
Alfiler, prendedor— nutucué hlélé, T.
Algarroba—huai—Ver: **algarrobo y recoger.** F.—hûh-ái, T.
Algarroba blanca (fruta)—uossot etzacke, hûái. T.
Algarroba negra—uósot-tzáje(*huo*) T.
Algarrobo blanco—uossot etzucke
Algarrobo—joái, jocái. P. V; Aiúc, F; hûa-yûcq. T.
Algarrobo—Aiúc. F. cuayuj; **palo de algarrobo**—Vide retro; **talvez de otro color**—hû-aiúcq. T.
Algarrobo negro uósot-tzoê-je. T.
Alguna cosa—imaic-cua
Aliento, suspiro, viento—nu-yiál, T. Ver: **respira.**
Alma—nu-hûe-séq; pl. nu-hûesei, T; núhéséj pl. núhéséi. T.
Almacen, tienda, (guarda prendas)—mañhié huét. T.
Almacen (guarda víveres) — tóclohcqhuet. T.
Almacenero (que guarda prendas)—mañhié huut. T. (gûut).
Almuerzo—notécji ó no-tejquii. P.
Aloja de chañar—let-tzení litzí T.
Aloja—hathess, litzí. T. qû-há, *ó* iqû-há
Aloja de algarroba—hua-lictzi, *vel,* huál-litzí. T.
Aloja de vinal—at-áj litzí. T.
Alto—á-tû-phó. T.
Allá—(«velo, está allí»)—ueleitzí, tojléin. F.
Allá—Cac'ní, ca-ní.
Amaca—tosuiyécque; T.
en Amaneciendo— unacquiuéj, T.
Amarillo—yá-ca-tdê, T.
Amiga (manceba)—hui-tojcui. P.
Amigo—Amico. F. ejiuítocq; bueno. M.
Amigo—ná-aguuéjqu, nugüécqu, T.
Amigos—na-aguué'héi, nugüejéi. T.
Ancho (muy)—quii-zap-phó, T. Ver. **madrejon**
Ancho—itzájquie, quii-tzaj hú, T. ojo *hú* subñjo en lugar de *i* prefijo: *tzaj* sílaba adjetivante; *quii, quiê,* raíz. Nótese la inversión; y sirva de indicio para otros casos. Ver: **estrecho.**
Andado (he)—nu-ihináji. *No has* **a.** *lê-'hi-'hi-tdê.*

«Andate» — mm'o, achimó, Mº H; opil,yopil. T.
«Andate no más» — Mogéme, nohém.
«Andate trae porongo» — miiá tapái. I. R.
«Andate á tu casa» — aquiopil. Ver: **Venir**. F. y T.
«Andate» — cué-mocué, mohué, muhué, F; miiá, miiéi, I. R.
«Andate y vuelve pronto» — opil topilcilá que lit, F; forma futura (arriba en lapiz) moh topilá jquel —lajá— **te has de apurar.** T.
Anoche—tojnatzi, F; hunatzimati, T;
Anoche—hunna-tzi-nna, T.
Anta—yelaj ó ielaj. Ver, **Caballo** P.
Anteayer—ihuala éc-láje, T.
Anteayer—icuala el-lake ó natzu.
Antes—Ver: **Adverbio.**
Anular, dedo—nuhuéje, común al índice y al dedo medio del pie y de la mano. Mº N.
Anzuelito con lengüita—hac-lej, T. timec. T. Ver **Boca**, haj.
Anzuelo—hac-lej, F; Timec. T.
Anzuelo—timécq. T.
Año—jlúp. Ver, **Invierno**. Probablemente se cita la estación. F. C-lúp, lòup; T.
Año (el pasado)—jlúp ejlájè, c-lúp ejláji, T.
Año entrante — c-lúp ne-quiayécq T.
Apagar—huijmi, P. umét, T.
Aprende—óm-la-ha néj. P.
Apuntar (escribiendo)—nojcuéchú ver: **lapiz.** Mº H.
Apurar, le apura el dolor—jléque amló—**se aflige por eso.** Ver **dolor. No me apuro.**—nam quel: **a la observación de «Trabajen muchachos.** F. y T. Ver: **ligero.**
Aquel—tojleitzi, tojsam, F; látzi tójlíne, tojleicné, T; litzé, netzi.
Aquel hombre—'hicnú licné, T.
Aquella mujer—atzic'ná lic'né, T.
Aquellas mujeres—atzinai lic'né, T.
Cquellos hombre — hicnul-lalicné, T.
Aquellos—nontoj? F; toquigüé, tohigüe (alf.); tojéss-tzu.
Aquellos—licné: toj'hcss licné, T.
Aquí—tojá, tojtzi, Ver: **allá** F.
Arafia—ckiú, quiú hut, T.
Arafiita—quiú hut jlós-saj. T.
Arbol—há-ló. Vel ac-lo, T; ah-lótal vez á superlativo, Ve: ramas, pl. ha-lói
Arbolito—ha-lo-cuuaj, T.
Arco—letzej.
Arco—letzeg, M. nolctzéj, F; (ojo al *no*).
Ariscos; las charatas son ariscas—tsitocue nouain tsaj; tzéss al plural. F; y T. (el plural).
Arma—nut-cué-lé-lé, T. Ver: **alfiler**
Armado (pescado)—castác y castácq, T. y P.
Armas—nut-cué-lé-lé.
Armero (el que las tiene)?—letzeg-'hi, T.
Armero (el que las hace) petzeghuu, T.
Arriba—Pho. **Voy para a.** Nui'hój pho.
Arribeños phom-le-léi.
Arriba, lado de—toj-pho mei, tojpom-éi. T.
Arroyito—teúc-huá. T.
Arroyo—**Preguntó ¿cuál?**—téc.
Asado—iú **quemado**, tobuccué; **asado**, probablemente **cocinado**, T; **asado**, pú-cué. T.
Asado (pon el)—phò a-pú-cue.
Asador—nu-poc-cue nouét, T.
Asentadera—Ver: **Sentadero.**
Ata el perro—óyiit cinoj, T.
Atras—tomquió **(abajo)**. Indio.
Avambrazo—nutcuéi, nojcuei, M. H.
Avansar—Huevito avanzó á los Tobas y los corrió — Nihuéhu ilonem Uancloi jojonné, F. Arriba de *ilonem* está *inéja*, y de *jojoné*, *tajojonne* como lo dijo Tajo. **Los tobas van á avanzar á Huevito** —Uancloi aitaj inehia nihuehuu, T; Uancloi huetaj ilonen nihuehuu, F.
Avanzaron (los Tobas nos)—Uancloi nenam (nenamá, T.) Venir F.
Ave—huentié.
Avellanas (silvestres)—totnájè nihuijc-lui *h* nasal. F. Mº H. **Semilla del cuidador del sapo.** T.
Avestruz — hualc-loj, P; Torobí (?) F. huanc-loj, T. Ver: **huso**
Avisame—huél nú'ho. T.
Ay! interj-mi marido, mi mujer etc —nu-cquie-cua-né tda, T; **(cuando se ha muerto).**
Ay, mi hijo, mi hija—nuj-ló-sé tdat, nu-jló-sé-né tdat, T.
Ayer—notejoasſ? Ver: **Dos y llegar.** P.
Ayer—naháque, F; icuála-náji.
Ayer—icuálannáke.
Ayer—ihuála nají, T.

Ayer tarde—qunahâque, F; hunájáje—no supo decir *ayer* sin *tarde*.
Azul—iit-tit-taj, T; azoleála—**castellano**, P.
Azul (casi)—it-tit-táj, T.

B

Baila—catin, catinjlin, T. (Parece ser voz Quichua). (*Catini*.)
Bailar—taj-ca-tin.
Bajad—nén-hiquió, ne-inquió, T.
Bajo—ickió.
Bala de fusil—letzég-c-lô *vel* c-lû; (*ô* igual á *oü*) Ver: **Semilla, munición, chaguar**.
Bañarse—nanaién, y nanaí—**no te bañes**—yacnaí. F.
Banda—c-lip-él—**vengo de la B.**—nu-tól-cá hlip-èc-li; **volvete á la B.**—o-plei c-lip-él; **pasa ó vete á la B.**—ni-hu *huiéi* c-lipél.
Báñate—nái. T.
Barba (parte de la cara)—nojlécq-no-j-lec-q.
Barba (pelo)—nu pozéi. M. (?)
Barranca—ta quia nagi. P; y-tequianaj. T.
Barriga, vientre ú ombligo—nutzijlilé; **gajo del vientre**, F; tzhé.
Barriga—tsetaj.
Barrigon—tsetaj, T.
Barril—ualin, T.
Basta, no quiero—mol-téj. T.
Bastante (gente)—casca huéra, P.
Bastantes, muchos—nogüe hope, F. hüej-hu, T.
Bastantes—hüéj-hu, T; **Ver; Muchos**, etc.
Bastantes tigres—ntoc aijioj; **no hay tigres** *lája* aiiój.
Bastantes huéj-hu
Batata batata, T.
Baul nuco'hi, T; **(ropero)**
Beba—ioyéj, F; iióyej, T.
Beba poco—ioyéj quiioj-laj, F; lecquiól-lecuáj. T.
Beba despacio—iajloconquió, F; **no se trague todo**, T.
Beba despacio yaj-jaelit, T. (no ligero, aplicable á otras acciones).
Beber niiot, ó niiótì, *ii* igual á y.
Beber i-íó, ó i-hió, T.
Beber, voy á nyonlá.
Beber, mi vaso de noj-hloc-ti.
Bebida en general nuj-loc-ti, T.
Bermejo rio teuctáje, P. **Rio grande.**
Bésame la boca—tzé-'hi núcáj. T.
Bien y vos?—eeh-amaj-tecná?
Blanco—pe lá ta, P.; pélaj. T. Ver: **nubes**; pé-láj. T.
Blanco casi es aquel perro—ácinoj aliné aitaj ipel-ji.
Blancos, í e. decentes—niyát, T.
Bobo (árbol)—sôêntá gi. P.
Boca de hombre—nucáj, nocaj. F.
Boca de pájaro—cuentié haj.
Boca de caballo—yelatáj, ó hielatáj háj.
Bofe—pe-cuéss, pe-ju-éss. T.
Bolas—noca tente, F. Ver: **Boleadora.**
Boleadora—tientein, F; nucá tentei—**mi boleadora, mis piedras**; T.
Bombero—niguaiécq. F.
Bonete—ziphó. T.
Bonitas son las chinas—tzinai ó tzinéi tzilatá. T.
Bonito—tsi láta—**bueno.** F.
Boquilla—no quietej. M.
Borracho—ucunáj.
Botador—cotuntaj, F. Ver: **Sauce.**
Botas—nizot pi-taj. T.
Boveda del paladar—nuhaj nuchaj, F. Ver: **Boca.**
Brazo (parte superior)—nu huapú, F y T. **(parte inferior)**—nu-tcuéi. T, avambrazo; **parte superior**—nutcuéi, nutcueséj. F.
Buche—pó-ní. T.
Buena muy eres—ahís; a-is.
Bueno (de aspecto)—tse la tha. P. **i. e. lindo.**
Bueno de forma—his, ó is. F. Ver **Bueno.**
Bueno muy—ahis, F; hom his. T.
Bueno de salud—éhg, ó hiéh; a-his jlin, T si. Ver: **Bueno**
Bueyes (dijo él)—huassétáss. T.
Busca (pan) oêc-cue (panij). T.
Busco—notéccue. T.
Buenos Aires—nos-litáj- **mi país**, F. notese la analogía de *lì* con *le* patronímico: *taj* es aumentativo como le convenía á Buenos Ayres pays de Faustino.

C

Caballo—iielatáj, *á*, yelataj, P y T.
Caballos—yélatáss. T.
Cabecita—le-téc-cuáj. T.
Cabellera—letéc-tdos (**cuero de la cabeza**)

Cabello (del hombre)—nu-huolé. T.
Cabellos (mis)—nokulei, P; nohuuléi, M°. H. Ver: **Hoja.**
Cabeza—étéc, núj-letéj, jletéc, **de bruto,** M°. H.; lé-técq. T; pl. létéi.
Cabezon—léc-quii-táj. T.
Cabra—cailá, F. (Es castellano, como Peiló de Pedro).
Cabrillas (grupo de estrellas)—pót-tzèc-lái. T.
Cacique—nokanniati, P. Can-niát, T; pl. can-niatéi, can-niát, T.
Cacique solo—ilác (cilac) canniat. T.
Cacique Indio—cquí-ri, M°.
Cacique general—toj-can-niát tizán. T.
Cacique principal—canniat tizán y toj-can-niat. T.
Cadena (del ancla)—tze-lojquietáj, M°. H, Ver: **barriga** y **collar**, cambiando el *quié* en *tsi* como de costumbre.
Caer—tollickiot.
Caer de—toll-pé.
Caer, ha caído una paloma—tsitocue ó tchitocue quiotquió, F.
Caer, «cuando ya ha caído»—quiotquió. F.
Cagar—jlám ó hlám. T.
Cajita—la-hi. T.
Cajitas de fósforos—itoji-huas. T; (*i* nasal en lugar de *hi*.
Calabrote—nahióc, M. H.
Callejón—noyije toj-lú-juécq.
Calor (hace)—chucúoitaj. P; quieûj. T.
Calzoncillos—ititaj (eran de tela y azules) M°. H.; no cosét timiéc. F. Ver: **chiripá.**
Callejón—noyije toj-lú-juécque. T.
Cállese—niquiét, T.
Cama—nohouét. F. Ver: **casa**; numa hauét. T.
Camalote—oyel. F.
Camalote, cañita medio rastrera—oiél. F.
Caminito—noyijcuaj. T.
Camino—tonoyje. F; noyque, noyíje. T. «**de atrás del camino**» lajnoyije.
Camino grande—noyijtaj. T.
Camisa—iéquié; **estoy sin camisa**—nojlam laja nuca iequié nopela-quó. F.
Camisa—nokaiéke. P; nojyéquié.
Campana—totahéj. T.
Campo grande—ajlú, jlocuéita, F; aj-lú-táj. T.
Campo muy grande—lajtanihiáje, ó lajtaniniáje. F.
Campo cuyo fin no se alcanza á ver—nogüitzi 'déh toj ajlú, (ajló) F.
Campo, campo grande, grande—ajlú: ajlú jlocueita: úeûû
Campo quebrado—á-lúj-táj-hiquió. Ver: **abajo.** T.
Campo limpio—ajlú tsatquié. F. Ver: **pasto.**
Campo muy grande, Pampa—halotáje. P; hajlutáj.
Cancha—catû—**vuelta.** Ver: **Codo.**
Canilla, parte inferior de la pierna—tcolói, coloí, M. H.
Cansado estoy—nu-iél-c-lín.
Cansado, yo—noiiel, P. Ver: **herido.** Iél-l. I. R. hiél-l.
Cansados estamos—noié-nén. F.
Canta—acquioij-c-lin. T.
Cantar á un enfermo—quióí, ó chioi, ó laquiosa: quióí.—**Cantar en general.** F.
Caña, cortadera—polotáje. P; polotataj. F.
Caña hueca—can-nuhiss. P.
Cara—baláña, P; notialú, noquialó. F.
Carancho—he-záj. F.
Cardenal (pájaro)—huosachitaj. F.
Cardenal (copete rojo)—huó-saquiit. T.
Carne, cuerpo etc de persona—nútzan. T.
Carne asada—huasetáj iú. F.
Carpa—tahuuetcuécuáj. T.
Carpincho—huméne. P.
Cartucho—c-lòhí, (*h* nasal), F.
Carrera—tel-lsán, pl. tel-lsánén T.
Casa (mi)—Nohuéte, Hauéte. P.
Casar, ¿cuándo te casaste?—quiejóte tan huaiey? Ver: **Casarse,** frases.
Cascabel—quiú hút-tzel, tzeliss. T.
Cáscara de la Tortuga—tdoj. Chin.
Casi—oitáj. T; icnája.
Cata pichona—quié-quie la-léss, T.
Cata—quié-quié, T.
Catre (dormitorio)—toma (1) ouet; nu-mó-ouet, a-etc., **de Juán**-Juán mó-out *vel* Juán-lo-mo-houet, T.
Cazador, es huén-ticin-quia; pl. huentiéi lacquiál, T.
Cazar, vamos á iiacantisa, P. Ver: **Ir.**

(1) En Mocobí cama se dice *oma*. rd.

Cazar, vamos á nquie-guajlei, F; **toma el fusil y vamos á cazar.** miéi aletzeg naquieguajlei. F. **N. fué á cazar** N. quiehual-leí cuentiéi, F; **yo me voy á cazar pájaros** nojlam quiehuacléi huentiéi.

Nótense las diversas escrituras debidas á las varias pronunciaciones reproducidas al punto; pero que conservan analogía. Sirva de regla.

Vamos á cazar acquiinat hio-hén huentiei, T.

Cayó T. en el río T. quiotquió Teuctáj **(cuando ya ha caido).** F.

Cejas nota quiosej, F. H. Ver: **ojos y sej.**

Celos tdisquien, T.

Cementerio hotolays, F.

Ceniza itój mucq, y moc **(lo molido del fuego),** T.

Cera de miel tzupá, M.

Cera de miel Zup-há-(*ph* igual á *b*) F.

Cerca atocueite, P; cat-hú-tha, F. (El primero dice, no muy lejos).

Cerca atocuéite; cat-hú-tha, T.

Cerca del día icuálainló **(al lado del día)** T.

Cerda que sirve de yesca noca itój-less, F.

Cerquita catú-tahuáj, T. Ver: **cancha.**

Cerrar pbu-hi, T. Ver: **Tapar.**

Cerro, cerranía tequienáje, P; téc—quié-náj, T.

Cicuta nijóitoijtaj, M.

Ciego asnam, F.

Cielo torobé, P. cotiesél (?) M.

Cielo pôêlé hpé-lé, phé-lé, T.

Cien caskayar, P. Ver: **Bastantes.**

Cierto, contesta á ¿lo es? Màt. T.

¿Cierto es, me querrás siempre? ¿hamato tojlo hémen no? F.

Cierto es màt, ó mat. T.

Cierto es màt, bpiye. T.

Cierto es esto màt imaquiá. T.

Ciervo chiuasset ó quiuasset.

Ciervo iielemé, P; quiuasé, cuasé. F. Ver: **Vaca;** quiiuassét. T.

Cigarrillo no-tzecq iúcu-as. M°.

Cinco nchene. P.; locató. M.

Cinco, más, muchos nitócq.

Cinco huális sije lac-ticúaiél. F; locató. M.

Cinta colorada. cinta icquiot. T.

Clama, grita ohn, hon.

Cobarde nohuaintzaj. F. y T; nûáintzaj.

Cobardes los no-uaintzess. T.

Cobardes son nu-aintzés-saje

Cocido iú. T.

Cocina (tá) cátai, cátéi.

Cocina (la) tojlonec huét, itoj huét. T.

Codo nucatú. Ver: **Rodilla.** M. H.

Cola de pájaro lequióss.

Cola de pájaro lequiós, *ó* quiòi. F. Ver: **Pluma.**

Cola de tortuga louéj. Chin.

Coleto jcaïoècquia.

Colmena pôên-né, acó-yécq. **(miel)** T.

Colmena pené. F. Ver: **Miel.**

Colmillos de un caballo yélatáj tzotéi. F.

Colorado icquiót. T.

Collar lot-zi-cass. M.

Coma poco teúj 'omaj liphá. F.

Comen (los viborones comen pájaros) hotzétag tehuén huentiéi. F.

Comer notej. F. (Este verbo tiene muchos temas con t, th, d, l, pero su *raiz* probable es *ec* áéc).

Comer piojos notej jlá., F; notúj jlá, Alf.

Comer, quiero nojlam hoitaj noithechi, i. e. **estoy para.** F.

Comer, él quiere hen-nó ha-lo-loj nonquiegé, F. Loj ó locque **comida.**

Comer, vamos á notécji. P.

Comida nû-lóc-q. T; loj *ó* locque. Nuj-loc. T.

Comido, el viborón había comido un conejo hozetá teû'j uyés, F.

Comisión militar ni- cutáj.

¿Cómo? atde-tzû? (hátdézu. T.)

Cómo hoteya. P. hóté

¿Cómo se llama ésto? tojtzi-lei? F.

¿Cómo estás? am-temnáj? naj, F.

¿Cómo se llama esto? at-tè p-lei (clei) toja.

¿Cómo? thèl loguoi, atdeiéjc, T. Ver: **Quién?**

yo Como siempre á esta hora (mirando al cielo) nodéj toj oténi. F.

¿Cómo está tu familia? am: am tem naj less?

Compañero cómo estás? am tem náj?

Cómo? atdeyjc? loyáj-lin. Ver: **Venus.**

Compañero aiñoj. **(tu)** nu-iñój **mi compañero**; loyáj-lin. Ver Venus.
Compra ovejas quiój tzonatáss T.
Compra pan quiiój pan. T.
Comprado, hemos comprado muchas gallinas nojlamil quioquén'houó ntó'c. F.
Comprar, yo lo compro nuquióje, niquióje, F.
Comprar nuquioje. P.
Comprarételo, tráelo atquiój niquióje là. F.
Comprendes hal-ha-nèj, Ver frases.
Compren pan quiiójén pan. T.
Compren vacas — quiiojén quiu--uasetass. T.
Con c-loya, uuitd, yá (subf).
Con cué, kié, *ycke, ecke*.
Con, y yecke, uuitd, c-loya
Concha (vulva) nessé. F.
Concha chica nessé lossáj F
Concha grande nessé úéúú'o. F.
Concha lanecji. P.
Conejito—yés, F. Ver **Comer**, frases.
¿Conoces á Pedro?—haltój-huil-lij Peiló.
No lo conozco—nun toj niyegde.
Constelación cerca del Crucero del Sud—huanjlój. Ver. **Avestruz**—M. H. Junio 1877.
Contener, vaso continente—subfijo *hi*.
Contento—nucá quii-si. T. si.
Contesta cquiôèl, T;a-nuel-nú'ho.
Conversar hon ckié
Conversar, están conversando iahuien, iahullen, F. Ver: **Lenguaras; está conversando con el otro** tahuilleqél, (ojo á la *q*) **está conversando** tahuille. F.
Convida chelipe. P.
Convida, (pidiendo) chaquitoje. P.
Corazón hotlé, hótelé, F; tót-lé. T; la-tú-dlé.
Corazoncito, pulso tdut-lé-cuáj.
Corona (de lo que sea) nocuí F.
Corran ne-que al-lú'jo.
Corre né al-lú'ho. T.
Correr, Huevito avanzó á los Tobas y los corrió Nihue'hu ilonem Uancloi jojonné. F.
Cortad is-sét, T; li-ssét.
Cortadera, paja que corta irlój.M
Cortar pasto ahutáj hepp. F.
Corto nu-isset, nisset.
Corzuela chona, P.; tzoná. Ver: **Oveja.**
Cosa: esta cosa imáiquiá; **estas, cosas**-tojéss-sá.
Cosa (alguna) imaic-cua. T; lohueys; **alguna cosita** imaic-cuáss.
Coser tzécau. Ver frases. T.
Costado de rancho hépp lip-éi. T.
Costal tot-zœlœc. T.
Costillas de la casa (Varazón) lassijhú li-lei hépp. T.
Costillas (la punta) nu-tzij-huli-lépéss.
Crecido (ahora está más) éhomnequiat-pujyáij. T.
Crecido tá-púyej.
Crecido tapuiécq. F. T.
Crecido está el río Teuctáj tapuiécq. F.
Creer catquiéû. T. Ver frases **Creer.**
Cristianos chihuéle, chigüele. F; Siguele.
Cristianos Chaquenses Cigüêle ajlú-taj lel-léi. T.
Crudo a-c-has. T.
Cruz chica tojlistec-**donde se corta leña.** F.
¿Cuál-(de cuál)? dté-tój hópe? T. (dt-td).
¿Cuándo? tde-nájj-'hoté? quiéjote.
¿Cuándo? cthénaj-'hoté.
Cuándo (conj.) quiá, vel quiól, quió.
Cuándo te casaste? quiejóte tan huaiey? F.
Cuando eramos chicas tojaj inácai nu-lá-sa.
¿Cuántas canchas faltan á la toldería? ¿quiojoté jel catú enoiom hauéte? Ver: **Codo.** F.
¿Cuántas veces dormiste con la china? tde hóte toj-lamoyij atzina?
¿Cuánto vale? tde-'hoté lája?
¿Cuánto? tde-'hoté?
Cuántos hijos tienes tú? quiehoté aless? F. **Tres hijos.**-noless lacticuáiel. F.
¿Cuántos días faltan á la ranchería? ¿quiejóte huála moiom hauéte, F.; **un día**-huala hoté'ji-(j nasal, parando un dedo.) F.
Cuarta parte hlip-pehiass. T.
Cuarto ó rincón hepp-jlip. T; pl. péi.
Cuatro tatuta. P.
Cuatro hualiss si'je ó i'je(j nasal.) F; tdi-cua-les'hiji. T.

Cuatro canchas ca-tú huális sije. F.
Cuchara lanecqué-nôêc. T.
Cuchara (mi) nu-calnôêc. T.
Cuchara (tu) calnôêc. T.
Cuchillo lequinaj. M.; nokatnate. P.; cquii-nácque, F.; lecquiianaj; **el cuchillo me ha cortado**-quienáj locnó. T.
Cuello lo-quu (huu). Chin (era de tortuga).
Cuernito donde guardan la yesca de cerda noca itojni. F.
Cuerda del arco letzeg-taj (?) M. aquí *tag* es por *thój*-cuero, de que está hecha la cuerda.
Cuero (de algo) ichontoje. P.; htój thój. hój. F.; *t* aspirada.
Cuero de vaca úasetáj toj, dhoj. F.
Cuero de tigre ayój dtój, dhój; ayo'je, thój. F.
Cuero de lobo latatáj thój. F.
Cuero, piel tdoj, tdock.
Cuero de oveja tsonatáj thój. F.
Cuero chico de nútria honolotáj thoj lojsáj. F.
Cuerpo nu-tzan.
Cuervo hichatúh. P.
Cuervo tze-tú-hûú. F.
Cuidado te vas á caer en el agua eiló, quiot inoi, Ver: **caer**. F.
Cuñada ticckié.
Cuñado quayenécke, nu-quioti. T.
Cuñado, a nu-quaie nécque, nuticquié. T.
Curar noilóje, F. Ver: **Vivo.**
Curar D. N. lo curó-D. N. Ochavá no él. F.; **D. N. me curó**. T., D. N. ochevá nú. **Los indios están curando al enfermo**-Nicquiei ilojeje tojiil-nén.
¿Cuyo es aquel perro? athec-ló sinój latzí. T. **Del señor aquel (suyo)** tojlaní la-ló. T.

CH

Cháguar, planta textil cactacea hûie; tiene flor grande blanca y, piña como ananá silvestre. F.
Cháguar con flor colorada no textil huiétas. F. Ver: **agua, caña, y chaguar. Flor de chaguar**-huiétás jlajúó. F. Ver: **flor.**
Frutita de la flor de Cháguar jlái. F. Ver: **Semilla, bala. Flor vieja del cháguar**-jleüéméc. F. **Flor nueva del chágnar** - nejquiaéc jlajúo, F. Ver: **hoja. Espina de la punta del cháguar**-huietás tzejlolis. F. Ver: **Gajo.**
Chaguarcito, i. e. Piolita Chicaní-'hió-léss. T., **los Cháguaresni-'hióí.** T.
Chajá (ave)-tzá-hój. T.
Chalana (canoa)-cuoj quiaje P.; huóoiáj. F.
Chancho de monte nitzáje; (era un cuero de dicho chancho) F.
Chancho nitzetáj, F. Ver: **Barriga.** T.
Chañar (fruta) letzéní.
Chañar letzení, F. Ver: **recoger;** letzeniúcque, T.
Charata (ave de comer, gallina de monte) tzitocué, tzitohué, F. Ver: **gallina.**
Charatas tzitocué, nitóccuè, T.
Chasque güêicásse, F.
Chica (concha) nessé lossáj.
Chico (dedo) nuhuéjlosé. M. H.
Chico (poncho) nogüéi jlotzá, F.
Chico, muchacho nocoáj, F.
Chico vapor hepp-losá, F.
Chico, a cainu-jualá, T.
Chicos, as cainu-lása, T.
Chicuta (yerba que se le parece) nijoitoij-táj. *Cicuta*
Chilca (yuyo con que prenden fuego) huitzoná, F.
Chimango (ave de rapiña) tziiáj, T.
Chimenea huitzéc. M°. H.
Chinas tzinai, tzinéi, F.
las Chinas son bonitas tzinai tsilatá, F.
Chiriguano huitní, T.
Chiripá huesój, M°. H. Ver: **frazada.**
Chiripá nocoséte, F; (casi Z).
Chuña nequié, F.
Chupa (Pedro ch. algarroba) P. étzé œtzœ) hú-á, T.

D

Dar Ver: **vender y traer, etc**, tzé, huen(n), atzé.
Decir Ver. Dices que.
¿De dónde? dtel che, tthel?
Dedo (uno) nucuuj. Hote-hohí, ó hotécuoají, T.
Dedo (grande) nucuuéj lú-cué, T.
Dedo (chico) nucuuéj los-sé, T.
Dedo (índice) nucuuéj tóje temló 'él toj huéju-quié, T. (dedo al lado del dedo largo).

Dedo del medio nucuuéj tój'hi'he létquiúéj, T.
Dedo anular, es decir, al lado del chico nucuuéj tój temló los-sé, T.
Dedos nucu-éss. T.
Dedos nuhuéss. M. H; nucu-éss, T.
Dejad huent-lá, moltéj, T.
Degollar lon, T.
Dele agua al patron uecnó inot auécq. T.
Demasiado, «muy bastante» huuéj-hu, T.
Deme (fuego) achój itoj, P.
Deme (agua) acquiój inóti, P.
Deme (comida) acquiój nodej, P.
Deme (tabaco) achóclej yucúas, ó, acquiój, P.
Deme huecnójó, (*h*, casi muda), F; atzé.
Deme ese poncho uecnojo tajsáme nogüéi (taj y toj se confunden) F.
Deme agua atquiój inóte, F.
Deme agua y fuego atquiój inóte isequiá itój, F.
Deme más om uéju, T.
Deme más, es poco tojcatzia, *ó*, mauéj, F.
Dentro nahi, ckui. Ver: **adentro.** ckui.
De repente ni-cquiéj-pho, T.
Derrota iocmen, F. Ver: **«Vencer»** en la forma *iucós* que parece tenga la misma raíz: se explicaría suponiendo invertida la relación respecto á nuestro punto de vista: carácter que asoma en las frases y que talvez es orgánico del idioma y constante, respecto á nuestra construcción.
Derrotaron, los cristianos á los Tobas Chigüélin jojonnéj Uancloi, F.
los Indios Derrotaron á los Tobas Uicquii jojonnéj Uan-cloi, F
Derrotó Mulato á los Tobas Mº. jojonnéj Uan-cloi, F.
Descansá, (parate etc) casit omatel-laj nutzi, T.
Descanzar nocasite, P. Ver: **Párate.**
Descarga arma guúm-lélé let-zéj, T.
Descargar el fusil notiój, F.
Descargar (peso) tinquió.
Deshecho, lo muc. Ver: **polvo.**
Despacio quiilayé, chilayé, F; yaj-jaelit, T; (no lijero).
Despiértame uajat-tlinnu, T.
Despiértate iájin pho, T.
Después, pasado naj, naji, naje.
Día, sol huála, ijuála, P.
Día (es) néi'cquiá icuála, T; necquiá icuála.
Dibuja guucquiala (huu), T.
Dibujado téc-les-séi
Dibujar nojlenécque, F. Ver: **Quemar.**
¿Quién dibujó esta yica? atdej lenecque hele? F.
¿qué Dices? eloguôye, F.
Dientes nuzutei, M. H; nochotéi P
Diez hoténi; juntando las dos manos paradas y abiertas con los dedos arrimados: de *'hote*, como; *n* plural; *i'hi* contiene.
Diminutivo quiaj, T, cuáj, finales: pl *ss* por *j*.
Dios, Diablo etc a-'hót, T.
Distante huói.
Dolor, lo apura el jléque, amló, F. Ver: **Patigado.**
Donde éyje, é, F. Ver: **dormir, estar** tdené, tdhé, dthé.
¿Dónde está tu mujer? héi hépa achécua? F.
¿Dónde dormiste anoche? elmo'-jí tojnatzi, (j nasal) F.
¿Dónde vas á dormir esta noche? elmóji hilá tojanatzi. F, forma futura. Ver: **Dormir.**
¿Dónde voy á dormir? enimo'ji, F. *j-nasal.*
Donosa muy eres ahis; a-is; ais.
Donosa (muy) a-hais, **tu eres muy buena.** F.
Dorado (pez) asáh, asaq. F; ásáp. T.
Dormid lo-mmó, lomó. T.
Dormir, voy á dormir nimó, nomó, numó, F.; **anda presto á dormir.** atquióopil quelit lomó *vel* nomó. F.; **Vamos á dormir.** atquiinoije nimó. F. **Váyanse á dormir.** atquïoopil lomohén. F.; **aquellos van á dormir.** tojleitzi huetaj nimó. F.
Dormir nimojil. F.
Dormir, estoy por nimó.
Dos hotéjoasí, F. y T; notejoasí, P. (*s* dulce).
Doy nigüecnú, F.
Dueño nyat. F. **¿Como se llama el dueño ó patrón?** atjéli niiat. F. Ver. **Patrón.**
Duele ¿dónde te duele? éyje tójoitáj?

Durazmillo (arbol silvestre) tzinéùc. F.
Duro tdéhn.

E

Eclipse (por qué está tapado) atdej ial-put in-'hia-'hi.
Echarse, no te eches agua iajtzói a-taphé inót. T.
Echarse, no te eches al agua ia-'ju'jo inót. Ver: **Bañar.** F. yajmóji inót. T.
El tojleitzi, tojsám. F.
Encender guuén *ó* huuén. T.
Encendido toj-lonéc. T.
Enemigo nu-jlic-cu-i. T.
Enemigos nu-jlic-cu-i-ís. T.
Enfermo yél, pl. yiss, yeliss, íil-l.
Enfermo am-uh **(no bueno)**
Enfermo de peste noj-nayej: F. *El güelmo* **dijo un indio.**
Enfermo iél-l. F. Ver: **Lastimado. Caballos enfermos.** yelatáj iél-l F noiel-l-I. R. **Muy enfermo está..** noiél-l dat. I. R. Ver: **Muerto.**
Enredadera que comen hervida y asada huiéláj, F.
Ensilla (el caballo) en jlin (yelatáj). T.
Entender, "yo le entiendo á vos" nitlodáma. M.
Entero, todo mojléquuécq. T.
Entra hu-cúu-i (e) hepp.
Entrante né-cquiá yécq.
Entren hu-yiái-cquiú-cui hepp. T.
Envenenada (estar) tiuicquiáya. T. **porque está envenenada.** optój tiuicquiáya. T.
Escribir, apuntar noj cue chú. M° H.
Escrito (lo) tó-ficnécq.
Ese tojlani, toj-sam, la-ni.
Eslabón (para fuego) nocai-tojquiá. F. M° Ver: **Pedernal, yesca y remedio.** También *chid*, por *quid*
Esos lettí, laní.
Espejo topéyac'hi. T; tu espejo apéy áj-'hi.
Espere aquié, F.; taquié, Alf; **¿á quién esperas?** atdepl níqulin. F.
Espero al cacique—ni-qulin niyat, F. Ni-ju-hil-lin.
Espinaca (yerba como)—tzumo cóloi, M.
Esposa—ciequá, checua.
Esposa tener—ciequá—yó
Espulgar—Ver: Frases.
Esquina (de rancho)—hepp-jlip.
Esta—'híje.
Esta cosa—imáicquiá.
Mulato está enfermo—Mulato iél-l, F.
¿dónde Está la ranchería? ¿é-y'je hauet? F.
¿cómo Está la familia? ¿am tem ná less? F.
Nosotros Estamos enfermos najlamil iél-l, F.
los Tobas Están enfermos Uanc-loi-iél-l, F.
los cristianos Están enfermos—Ghigüéle guil-l nén, F.
¿dónde Están las charatas? éy'-je tsitocué, *vel* tchitocué, (*j* nasal), F.
¿dónde Están los Tobas? ey'je Uanc-lói, F.
aquí Están i'je toja-hue, F.
¿adónde Estn? i'je, (*j* nasal casi *h*), F.
Están allí los Tobas Uanc-lói ije toj-leitzi, F,
Estar c-lin, T. Ver: **Estás sano.** Frases.
Estas cosas tojessá.
Estás (como)? am tém náj?, F.
EsteTój, tojtzi, F; tojá, Alf. Tójá, T; tóji. **Estos** tojéssa. T; tojess.
Estiércol ya-moôéc, T.
Estómago Ver: **Buche.**
Estoy mirando á los Tobas iectoj nigüen Uanc-loi, F.
Estoy yo enfermo nojlam no iél-l, F.
Estrecho quiitzaj-hi-húmtde, T. Ver: **Ancho.**
Estrella grande (lucero?) calondána, P.
aquella Estrella brilla mucho catéss a-lítze is-si, T.
Estrella en general catés, M.
Estrella de la tarde igueláj quiécuá (mujer de la luna), T.
Estrella zehféss, (vista á las 7 en Agosto arriba), M. H.
Estrella compañera de la luna—igueláj toyájlín catéss.
Estrella de Oriente de la noche—ijuála-hú, M. H.
Estrella, lucero potzijléin, M°.H; potzel ái. F.
Estrellado, (está bien) tejzel iom caná, F.
Estrellas (las) catés tzél. T.
Estrellas chicas (Via Lactea)—tzé'h-iéss, T.

Estrellita grande catés zéjlass litzé, T.
Evacuar noc-lam, F.
Extranjero i-quiom jlé-lé, T. (de ahí de abajo).

F

Falsa es esta cosa imáiquiá kamata, T.
Falsas son estas cosas tojéss-sá ckamata T.
Falsas cosas (no ciertas) ckamata, T.
Falso ka-matt, matti-dé (**no cierto**).
Falso es mât ti-thé. T.
Falta me hace iuéjla, F.
Falta mucho camaj-nitócq. I.R.
Familia (mi) nojléss, P.
Familia (mi) nucá-uicquii.
Familia (tu) acá uicquii
Familia nu-cá uicqui. Ver: **Indios**, T.
Familia (su) laca-uicquii (T. agregó *toj-láni*).
Fatigado está j-lique amló, F; (hablando de un picado por víbora que estaba con dolor). Ver: **Dolor.**
Feo catchija, catzia, M.
Feo, "fiero" catziá, tzi-tdé (á la moda de los arribeños); catzihaya, tzihátde, (á la moda de los abajeños).
Fierro quiináj, F. Lo que es de fierro.
Finado, os a'hót, ahot-toj-la-yss,T
Flaco (animal) lúpén, F.
Flecha lutéc, M.
Flechero lutecq-huu. T. Carcax, mazo de flechas, lutéc less, M. Ver: **Familia.**
Flor lahuot, F; lahuu, y laguu, T.
Flor de la miel ca-caunéj, F.
Follaje huolei. Ver: **Vellón.**
Forastero ajlu-taj jlé-lé, T; (de ahí del Chaco).
Fósforos Ver: **Fueguitos.**
Fraguar huehié, F. P; **quiere hacerme (fraguarme) mal** P. loitaj huehién clin nô, F.
Frazada huesáj, P. Ver: **Chiripá.**
Frazada, punta de la – huesaj jlip, F. Ver: **Pedazo.**
Freno yélatác lucái, M. Ver: **Boca, picadura.**
Frente del hombre nuj-le-téj M. Ver: **cabeza.**
Fresco y nuevo néc-quiayéc, T.
Frío (tiene frío) cocuá P; **hace frío** huiéte P; tequioje, F; nuicucuá, T.
Frontera noca-puesto, P.
Fruta hu-lo-lá, T.
Fuego itoj, P y T; **deme fuego**— achoj itój, P; **haga fuego**--quélit itój, F.
Fueguitos (fósforos) itós-sass, T.
Fuerte, es-ten, teen
Mulato es fuerte mulato-enquié, F; **los Tobas son fuertes** Uanclói teen-quié, F. Ver: **Duro.** En la 1ª frase la *t* puede haber quedado sumida en el *to* de mulato, según la índole de este idioma.
Fusil noléchéj, P. Ver: **Arco, Bala.**

G

Gajo del huiái, hui-áij-lilé, F.
Gallina houó, F.; 'hu-ú, T.
Gallos (riña de) hú-u toc-léi.
Gama quionáj, chonáj, tzonaj.
Gato miche, P.
Gente bastante casca huéra (Indios) P.
Gente poca nontoc quedán. (?) Ver: **Bastante.** P.
Gente de Iaguané Iaguaneca uiic quii, T.
Gente, familia uicquii.
Golondrina huizotá, F.
Gordo iiotaj, P.; *vel* iotáj, F.
Grande jlucuéita ó hué-hu, F. Ver: úeuú y lucué, T.; huéju, güe-qu.
Grande toj locuéita. toj huéhu, F,; huéju ó güe-ju. T.; («el *toj* lo ponen de gusto, sin el *toj* no anda bien») F. lú-cué.
Grande (más) ehóm huéjh-ia, T.
Granizar pél-lái iguum-quió-j-laté (qualaté).
Grieta pocuotáj, F. (*c* toscana).
Grillo ti-tzil (era parduzco). T.
Grita, clama óón, hón, T.
Gritar honj-lin, Ver: **hacer.** F.
Guitarra tojzitec, Mº. H.
Gusanos iguus, T.
¿Te gusta la carne asada? al hemén huasetáj iú? F.
Me gusta más esto nuquieímo tójá, F,
Esta me gusta más nuiquiémen tojá, F.

¿cuál te Gusta más? ettój lemén F
Gustas (tu me) ajhemén no, F.
Gusto tengo nu-hiss hlin, T.
Gusto (te-?) al hemen noye?, F. (*noye* acusativo de *noj* (?)
Yo te gusto («**tú me gustas**») nogemén, I. R.

H

Háblalo onquié, T.
Hablame oná, onná, T.
Hable áhuui.
Hace calor chucuoitáj, P.
Hace frío huiéte. Ver: **Frío** P.
Hacer «yo hacer» noiem jlin, F.; **¿qué haces?** atjléni, F.; **estoy haciendo una chalana** iiénjlin huó-oiáj, F. Ver: **pato; ¿quién hizo la chalana?** adhéj jlenéque huo-oiáj, F; **yo la hice**-nojlenécq, F.
Hacha husán, F. (tal vez castellano).
Hállame (el camino) uen-ní-lá noyque, T.
Hállame (la vela) omaj-le-huuén uéla.
Hambre tengo no-cheyé. P.; núnquiéyé, T.
Hambre tiene este na-in-lo-nejj.
¿Hambre tienes? alquieyé, F.; **si tengo** eegh, nuquiéyé, F.
Hambre na-in-ló.
Hambriento náin-ló-ló-néc, T.
Harina halináh, P.
Hasta eckia.
Hasta mañana chquiá i-cuála, T.
Hay vacas en la toldería? aquiuasetáj. hi'je? F.; (*j* nasal).
no Hay palomas tsitocue ijejite (*te* por *dhe*) T.
aquí Hay dos palomas pardas tsitocue ije tojtzi hotecoasi tocasite, F.
Haz (el pan) guu ó huu-pana, F.
Hebra de chaguar oletzéj; **deshecha**-oletzaj muc, T.
Hembra tsinâ, F.
Hembra tziná, atzina, pl. ai.
Herida ti-loc-nó. F.
Herida, una paloma está herida tsilocué iél-l-(ó muerta). F.
Herido noiél-l, F. nú-né-té, F. (talvez equivalente al negativo *am-uh* invertido por el *tde;* es decir nú-né-te. T.)
Hermana noquienéj, M. H.; noquuitaj, F.
Hermana ckinno.
mi Hermana aquella es noquuita tojleitzi, F
Hermano (mi hermano aquel es) noquûi-nij tojleitzi, F: (*huûi* muy suave).
Hermano lecckila, icckiilá
Hermano (mi) nuchicnó, M, H; noquuinij, F; (*cui*, mas dulce)
Hermano mayor (le dice el hermano menor) lecquílá tojasnác) que.
Hígado tonéj, F; ó tonéc, T
Higuana halóeuj, P
Higuana ajlé, F
Hija mi) noj-losé, F.
Hija lectzá
Hijo (mi) norloss, P; nojloss, F; loss, *hijo.*
Hijo lotsé, lo-csé.
Hijo de perro cinojloss, F.
Hilar ó torcer potzin, F.
Hilo de cháguar torcido niñoih, niñhioi, E; ni-nhiót, T.
Hilo de lana de oveja tsonatáj holéi, F.
Hilo torcido ó no toc-ca-lé, T.
Hilo rojiso huesetáj, M. H.
Hilo negro iquíaláj, M. H.
Hinchado icuá.
Hoja de huielás huielás jlahuís, F; (Especie de cháguar con flor amarilla sin fruta ni hebra).
Hoja de palma huôt-zej huuléi, T.
Hoja (en general parece) huoléi, lo-huóléi, T; la-huuléi, T.
Hoja de la puerta lápé hút, T.
Hombre icnú, ycnó, F.
Hombre hecho, mozo desarrollado icnú toj lolíq, ó lolije, F.
Hombre grande icnú lucué-taj, T.
Hombrecito icnucuáj; pl. inúc-lásss, T.
Hombres icnúl, T.
Hombro de hombre nuhuól, M. H; nuhuúl, T.
Horcon cquiœté; *mi etc*-nuca-etc, T.
Horcon de otro to-cá-cquié-te, T.
Hormiga tsiguanaze, P.
Hormiga, la negra que pica tziguanos, F.
Hormigas tziguánáss, T.
Hormiguero huolópo, P; tziguanáss-ca-hút, T.
Hoy icuálanná; ihuala nén-ná, T; icuala nén-ná.
Hoyo, agujero, pozo, fosa de muerto chuhéj, chuiéj, F.

Huevos genitales nuquiòniss, M. H.
Huevos let-quiél, F.
Huevos de gallina ho-huó let--quiél, F.
tienes Huevos de gallina alogüen hohúó let-quiél; **tengo diez** nigüen hoténì (juntando las dos manos), F; **no tengo**-namuén, F.
Huevos de carancho hézáj léquiél, F.
Humo te-tsaj, F y T, *ts* vel *z*.
allá hay Humo defuego itoj tetsáj ueleitzi, F.
Humo del vapor heppc*a*te-tsaj, (ojo al *ca*), F.
Huso nocanjlój
Huso to-ca lé huét; *mi etc* nucala-huet, T.
Huso anj-lój, nojánjloj. Ver: **Avestrúz**.
Huso nocanjloj, F; (*mi*).

I

Iglesia to'huó'hoto'hí, T.
Iguana ajlé, halóeuj
Indice (**dedo de pié y mano**) nuhuéje (medio y anular). M H.
Indios de Mulato Uiquii, F.
Indios de Huevito cu équiatás, F
Invierno l-lóp, F. Ver: **Año**.
Ir Ver: **Luna se pone y Volar**.
Ir moj, opil **¿Vas solo?** atloi ije? F: (tal vez *atloyje*) **¿Con quién vino Pepe?** atcloiyá Pepe? Atloyá, F; **Vino con Pedro** lo yá Peiló, F; **Vamos, es noche** yopil onatzi, qunatzi, M (*es talde, dijo*) **Vamos á salir** noyopil, no yje, F: **Allá se han ido las palomas** tsitocué iehuho tojlein, F.
Ir, opil, y opil **nos vamos al Teuco** nio-pi Teucuei; opil, yopil. *Vayanse*-mó-hén opil. **Se ha ido, se fué** yá húi; yiicté, ia-húc. **Se va** yahú-yéi.
Voy á la Colonia huoté noíc Colonia, Alf.
Iré pronto á Buenos Aires nojlam paji déh noiquequo Nojlitacque noycq, F; (lugar distante) **me voy** noycque.
Ir por la orilla del rio loj'huai. F; (*h* nasal) **Vete á poner los zapatos** môj tsiiquie nitzohess, F.
Andate achimo, M H; aquiopil, F.
Ande (?) iajcael, F.
¿Adonde vas? que li ho hé? Alf.

J

Jaula huenquié-'hi. F. Ver: **Pajaro**.
Jaula huén-tiei-'hi, T.
Joven letzá, F; mamsé, T.
Jugad cqúhíáss, T.
Juntada (**monton**) tóhccue, T. Véase: **Recoger.** Frases.

L

Labio superior nujatój, M H; (cuero de la boca).
Labio inferior nupozet, M H.
Lado de (**al**) temló, T
Lado de abajo tem-quió, *casi*, temcquió, T.
Lagartija chalát, F.
Lagartija como Iguana chica asáp, F.
Laguna c-lemchitá, M; hlá-pút, T.
Lampara hueláj, F. Ver: **Luna**.
Lana tsonatá huoléi; F y T.
Lanza (**la punta**) en huét M.; nohén, F; nodtój, nodtóje; hœn ó hen, T. (*nodtoj* es el fierro de que se hace).
Lapiz (**tisa**) nocaitó, P. Ver: **Apuntar.**
Largar hláni ó c-laní, T.
Largo pcitaj. F; pi-taj, T.
Lastimado am-úh, (no bueno) *o* iél-l (enfermo) F.
Lastimado en la nuez del pié nucá amúh, F.
Lastimado amúh locnó.
Lastimado perro cinojiél, F.
Lastimado me ha locnó, F.; **el caballo me ha volteado** yelatáj locnó, F; **el caballo me ha muerto** yelatáj tilocnó, ó locnó, F; **el cuchillo me ha cortado** quiénáj locnó, F.
Lastimado á la nuez del pié am úh: nuca ãmúh.
Lavar nilejquie, F; c'lej. T.
Lavar ropa noléje P.
Lavarse nilejquie, F., léj-lin **lávese,** T.
Lavarse nonái, P; notipoj, M.
Lavarse los ojos y todo lejquié nutéi, F.
Lejos tocuey, P.
Lejos muy atójoi, hom ataq-uiaí, tuquoéi, T.

Lejos (muy) atojoi, P; tucuéy, T.
Lengua (física) nuca-jlo-jié, M. H.; luca-jle-jché, M H, (era de un chimango).
Lenguaraz tojlahuiénécq, F; **yo lenguaraz** nilodama, I R; Ver: **conversar.**
Lento, tardío hunajj.
Leña kiahan, P.
Leña, córtala, ó te voy á pagar istén alói nau-la-háya, F.
Leñas ha-lói.
Lerdo niquioniat, I R.
Leon boalaj, P; oá-láj, T.
Levantarse, el sol se levanta huala nep-hō. F; **La luna se levanta** hueláj nequiénom, F.
Lijero caelitt, quelit, F; Ver: **apurar.**
Limpia, el agua está inot çoj, F.
Limpiar mocos léj anicquiil.
Limpio coqui, F.
Lindo tzilatáj, T; **Mi caballo es mas lindo que el tuyo** nu-c-ló hóm-tzilatá-yá hote-ji-tdé («no se iguala»); ac-ló cahtzia, T; («el tuyo fiero»).
Lenguaraz (yo?) nilodáma.
Liña de chaguar niñoléss, F.
Lobo de agua hualata, laláta, P; ilá-ta-táj, T.
Lobo de tierra italatáj
Loco ckáinúya, opa, T
Loro (ave) elé, F.
Lucero (estrella) potzel-ai, M; potzijléin, M H.
Lucero (estrella) ai, potzelai, M
Lucero de la mañana icualá'ú *vel* hú (Lit: «que hace el día», talvez).
Luna tsimini, P; huelãoj, M; igüelajj T, N.
Luna nueva elaj tojnequioije, F; (emqiezan sus empresas) No tienen **luna llena.**
Luna (la otra l) igüélaj-él, T.
Luz itój, F; **allá hay una luz** itój leitni, F

LL

Llama del fuego la-cúáca, itoj-cúáca, T; (es decir: itoj-ca-kuac)
Llama la-huac, T.
Llama a P onná P, T; Ver: **Habla, Grita. ¿Cómo se llama el dueño del caballo?** atjlei niiat? F; **M. es el patron del caballo** M, jlouéc-que yelatáj, F; **¿Cómo se llama el cacique** atjléi caniat? F.
Llamar, yo me llamo nojcléi de persona, F; **¿Cómo te llamas?** ateleihiam ó atpleiam, F; **¿Cómo se llama esto?** at-té p-léi (*vel*-c-léi) toja, T; **¿Cómo se llama aquella mujer?** hateleitzina leitzí, F; **¿Cómo se llama esto?** tojtzilei, F; (*Lei, j-lei, p-lei* es el tema del verbo llamar).
Llegar yom; **mañana llegaremos á la toldería** toiojmilá quiicuála nohuét, F; (ojo al futuro) Ver: **Mañana. Ayer llegamos á la Gangallé** toiojmij nuháhá-que Cananagui (pasado ayer) F.
Llegó recien nequié nom, F.
Llevar, lleve agua al patron atquiojo-néi inóte nihiát, F; (ojo onéi).
Lleve agua y fuego honein inót niiat, isíquiei itoj, F.
Lleve agua ó caña atquiojonéi niiat inóte jloié inóttaj, F
Llorar (un muerto) nolac-lin, P; Ver: **Gritar, Hacer.**
Llorar un muerto niyoyén hót (y porteña) F.
Llueve pejlái, F; umquió, T; péj-lái, T; iguumquió, T.

M

Macana et-tec-taj, F y M.
Macanero et-tec-tjá-huu, T; huó.
Macho, (mulo) asnácquè. F. Ver: **Oso.**
Macho asnajj.
Madera halói, P; ha-ló-lúcue, T.
Maderas ha-lo-lucuéi, T.
Madre nocóte, P.
Madre nucó, F.
Madre de un perro cinójcó, F.
Madre ccó.
Madrejón j-lémquii-taj, T. Ver: **ancho.**
Maduro iú.
Maiz tzi-pót-ca, T.
Malo—nuhamõu, M.
Malo cuuichaje, P; huitzaj, F, (chaj-tzaj).
Malo no bueno katzia, tzitdè.
Mamar tip, F.
Manco—cué-quiáj, T.
Manda (tu), tat-nói.
Mandioca man-nioca, T.
Mano cuéyi, nutcuéi, T.

Mano grande tec-cuéi quiútáj, T
Mano notkuay, P; nutcué-quiú, nutcuejiú, M, H.
Mano de mortero huélec-quiá, T
Manos nutcueyel; (tocándoselas).
Manos (las dos) nutcuéi nutcueyel (tocándolas).
Mañana (cras) icuála, P; quiicuála, icualá, F.
de Mañana inatáje.
de Mañanita inemptáje.
Mañana icuála, chiicuala, chihuala, T; casi quihuala, (ó. *c*).
Mañana, hasta chquíá icuála.
Marcha mmóh, T.
Marido, (del hombre y de la mujer) nuquiécua, T.
Marinero hepp-bu-uos (*u*), *vel* hepp la-huos, T.
Martín, pescador (ave) cojtét. F.
Mas hom, *ó* ehom. Ver: **Comparativos. Es poco, deme mas**-toj catzia, óm-a-úéj.
Mas ehóm, T, hom.
Matado, nosotros hemos matado muchos tigres—nojlamil lonen aiiój ntócque, F; **¿quién le ha matado?**—adej tojilón? F; **yo he matado**—nojlam tojilon, F.
Matar nulóni, P.
Matar loní, F; ilón.
Matar, los Tobas están por matar Uanc-loi oitáj loní, F; **te voy á matar**—nailonlá, F.
Mataran, los cristianos mataran á los Tobas— Chigüélé lonlá Uanc-loi, F.; **los Tobas matarán á loscristianos**—Uanc-loi ilonén cigüéle, F.
Mató, Mulato mató á un hombre —Mulato ilon icnú. **Vel** icnó. F.
Barbosa mató á **un Indio**—Uarbos ilon Icnú, F. **Los Tobas (el Toba?) mató á Wilken**—Uanc-loi ilón Mulato. T.
Mate partido de tomar agua—huotzotajess. T.
Mate de tomar esto—toc-lo-ti ó toj-lo-ti, T.
Mate entero—huotzotaj, pl. huotzotáj-ess, T.
Mea, Orinar—oel-l (l-mojada), T.
Mear—nothél, F.
Mecha—itój-léss, M.°
Porta Mecha—itój-hí.
Mi Mechero—nuca itój-'hí.
Medianoche—hunnat-chiú-ueck ó quiú-úéj.
Medias,tapa-pié nut-coh-ló-bhut,T.
Médico de los Indios—hayagüé T.
Medio, en el medio— quiú-úéj, chiu-ueck.
Medio, (dedo mediano)—nuhuéj, M. H. indicándolo con el acto. Analíticamente es: nucuuéj tój 'hihe let-quiúéj—el dedo que está en el medio, Ver: media noche.
Mediodia—gunachú-güe, F.
Mediodía—icuála ikni, T.
Mejilla—nuquiáluss, M. H.
Melon—Nelóm, T.
Meloncillo—nelón-tájcu-á, T.
Membrillo del monte—atzaj, T.
Ménos—yajlom.
Ménos pida—yajlom is (menos bien).
Ménos—yáj-lom (no-más-**ehom**).
Menstruo y sangre en general—huys, F.
Mentira-no—huem-chomli, P; Ver: **Olvidar;** má-ti-tdé, qniómlin, T.
Mes (el otro)—igüéláj-él.
Mes ó luna—igüelajj.
Meses—iguuéliss. T.
Meses (dos)—igüéláj hotejóasi, T.
Meses (cuatro)—igüélát thicuales'hiji, T.
Meses (muchos)—igüélát nítócque, T.
Meses diversos—(no los distinguen).
Metal—quiináj, cquiináj; Ver: **fierro, cuchillo.**
Mexquino—tzuj-náj, T.
Mia, esta vaca es mia—huasetaj tzinoló, F.
Miedo—nuuai (mi); T. uái., huái.
Miedolento—huaintzaji.
Miedoso—nuuaintzáj, T.
Miembro viril — nujló M. H.; nojlú-o-u. F.
Conmigo—nuyiaque, nú-cua.
Mio—nu-coh, nu-c-hó ó núc-hó, T, nuc-que, nú-cá.
Mio—lacató, F.
Mio, es mio esto—no-catotója, F.; Ver: **Mio, Este.**
Mirar, estoy mirando á los Tobas—iectoj-nigüen uanc-loi, F.; (Tal vez **rectos**-«si esto»
Mirar—ya'hin. T.
lo Mismo, Así no más Siempre—j-lám-méje. T; (de: j-lam-*mismo*-eje-*con*)

Mistol—hoiáj, hovap,ú F.
Mistol (árbol)—o'hoyck, T.
Mistol (fruto)—ohoyácke (j), T.
Mitad, pedazo—hlip, T.
Moco—anicquiil (tu m), T.
Mojado (está mojado)—toséi, F.; Ver: **Mujer hecha. molido, deshecho, hebra**—muc. Ver: macotaj muc.
Monte—tacníj ó tacnii, F.; tac-'hii, T.
Monte grande—tacníi, jlucuéita, F.
Montón — tos-cúnécq, T; tóhccue, toh-cúnecq.
Montón de porotos — toz-cunec oniac, T.
Morder, una víbora lo mordió—hótzáj, iuquuáj noel, F.
Una víbora lo mordió ó pico al Indio—huetzáj iuquaj noél. F.
noel—(á un nuestro; otro-nos; paysano).
Morder—hucuáj, F.; yuquué, Alf. Ver: **Picar**.
Morder piojos—no hucuáj jla, F.; **no muerda piojos**—iajlucuá jlá, F.; (ojo neg. **iaj**;) **no muerda piojos delante de mí**—iajlucuá jla tojnsian, F. y Alb.
Morir—iil.
Mortero—huélec, T.
Mosquito, y os—vapiná.
Mosquitero—ta huetcuecuáj, T.
Moverse (temblar)—uají. Ver: **la tierra se mueve**.
Movimiento—Toll.
Moza—atsilát-ha-(muy linda), F.
Moza—atsilatha,
Muchacha (virgen)—lét-zácuáj, T; (**muchachita**).
Muchacho (joven)—mám sécúáj, T; (sé o tsé).
Muchachos — inot-tzass, inóc-sas. Ver: **Hombre**.
Mucho—nuthoccui, hùn tocq, F.
Mucho — nuthoccui, hun to-cq, M. H. **a-quei**. ndtócq, F.
Mucho—notócque, ntócqué, M. H. Ver. **querer**.
Mucho (es)—huuéjhu, T.
Muchos—Ver: **plural**, Ntócque, nitócque.
Mucho tiempo—paj-cquié.
Mucho — ntóc; nítócq. T. (5 ó más).
Mudo—nouó, huohuó. F.
Muere—iél-l, F.
Muerto—hót, F. Ver: Sombra. **Ya está muerto**—i-iel,-iél-l dat, I. R. **ha muerto** si iil eeh, I. **no ha muerto**—yignigtdé, I.
Muerto—iél-l, tilocnó, locnó, hót, F. é I. R.
Muestrame—púyen, T. huan-lécque (á ver) puyec-nuya.
Mujer tuya, tienes mujer ó está tu mujer?—alchocua:—hije.
Mujer de Manco—Mancú tquiécuá, T; pl. áss.
Mujer—nochecoa, P; nu tquiécuá, T. Ver: **Hembra**.
Mujer (tu m.)—a *ó* ha, *ó* ah tquiecuá, T.
Mujer—chécuá, quiécuá.
Mujer hecha (muchacha desarrollada)—tzina tojseije, F. Ver: **Hombre hecho**. Ver: **Mojado**.
Mujeres (mis)—nu-tquiecuáss, T.
Mujeres (dos)—nu-tquiécuáss hotejoasí, T.
Mulato (el cacique)—Hiues-cós, F.
Mulato mató á un hombre—Mulato ilon icnú. Ver: **Icnó**.
Munición—letzegclô letság, F; Ver: **fusil chico, bala**. ô qualà ou—**semilla**.
Muñeca ó Pulso — nutcueguú *ó* nutcuehuó. T.
Muslo (parte superior de pierna) clajp-hú' F.

N

Nación (otra familia)— uicquii-él, T.
Nada (verbo)—ec-lin. T.
Nada (no tengo)—namugüen. F.
Nada—Kia-tquiái, T; tdát, láj-imaquia.
Nadar—nótlin, la-ctílin.
Nadie—jquiái, uenítde-nada, T.
Nalga—nu huej quia, V. **Sentadero**.
Naranja—hachéte, P.
Nariz—nócness, M. H.
Nariz de caballo—yélatáj néss, T.
Naveta de tejer poncho — uéss sáj-cquiá, T.
Naveta de tejido—(mía)—nu-yecquiá. T.
Naveta para trama en general—le-cquié. T.
Neblina—te-tsétái, F; Ver: **Humo, barriga**—tôetzé-táj, T.
Necesitar—tteñinló.
no Necesito—namtteuin ló, T.
Negro—quiálata, P.

Nido—hohuentié-lep, T.
Nido de cata—quié-quié hlép, T.
Nido de torcaza—tsé-pep hlép, T.
Nieta—nu quia-yó, N.
Nieto—lec-quié-iós. T.
Niño, Niña—*niyat*, léctzá-cúájetsa-á (decente), T.
No—hcáh, F; jká, (prefijo) tde (subfijo) am (prefijo é interrogativo) vajj, ya, (prefijo interrogativo) Láj (prefijo) Ckah, T; (solo), tdat, dtat, (final de frase).
Noche (esta)—hunná, kia-hunná.
Noche (es)—nécquiá hunatzi, T.
Noche—qùnatzi. F. Ver: **ayer noche, dormir, mediodía**—húnatzí, T.
Anoche—hunatzí-néná.
No hay ningún tigre—lája aiojè, F.
No hay—güenité, güenide. Varios. **La negativa** *ddéh*, parece propia de 3ª persona.
No hay palomas—tsitocué ijejite, F; *te* es por *dhé*.
No....mas—iném Ver: respirar.
No me apuro—namquel, F.
No quiero—moltéji, molté, M.
No tengo—namuén, F. (Nam=Nuam=yo nó.
No te bañes—yacnáí, F.
No te heches al agua—iáquqo *ó* iàhùho inot, F; *q ó h* nasal—fijarse en la forma negativa *ia* que parece propia de la 2ª persona.
No vale—hahí ddéh, F; *dd* aspirada.
No veo palomas— namuen tsitocué, F.
Nombrar—Ver: Frases.
Nombre de mujer—uetziliatej.
Nombre de mujer—Namtojlécque (no te conozco.)
Nosotros— nojlamáh, nojlamil, F y T, icnamíl, F.
Nubes—pe-lé, F.
Nublado (el cielo está)—pelé lipút péh, F; hpéle nóm, T.
Nublado—pœle nom.
Nuera—nu-ti-quié, T.
Nuestro ó mio—lacató, F.
Nuevo— nejquiáéc, F. Ver: **Chaguar, luna nueva.**
Nues del pié—nu casup-há, M. H. Ver: **Lastimado.**
Nunca—icnemid. Ver: **Nunca he ido**: respirar y latir.
Nunca—hin-ne-mid, T.
Nunca—íc-ne-mid, T. y F, (hin-né-mi).
Nutria—hamana, P; lonolotaj.

Ñ

Ñato- — iniató. Voz castellana. Creen que las mujeres y tambien los hombres se hacen ñatos si comen carne de oveja, especialmente cuando están embarazadas. Tal vez la oveja fuese un «totem». Fijarse mucho en la *i* prefijada á voces de otros idiomas.

O

O—conj. jloié. F. Ver: **Lleve.**
Ojos del hombre—notéi, P; no-tecluí. M. H.
Ojos de pájaro—cuentié téi, F.
Ojos de un chimango—tejlúi: M.H.
Olvidar — huaichomblé, P. Ver **mentira.**
Olvide—alhœ-sét let-téj. T.
Ollita de barro—to huéc. M.
Ombligo—nu-tzác, T.
Orejas del hombre—no chotéi, P; nuquiotéi, M. H.
Orejudos, Tobas del Teuco—quioteleitás; orejas con tarugos ó agujeros, F.
Orinar—œel (*l* mojada).
Oso hormiguero hembra—seláje, P; sélajè, T.
Oso hormiguero macho—isnáje, P
Otoño—no tienen, F.
Otra vez (más)—yiip ó yíp, T.
Otra vez—ob-á-cú *vel* ip-lá-jquéi, T.
Otro—él, F.
Oveja macho—chinácq, F; *chi* por *tsi* tal vez por *tsindj* ó *tsindt*.
Oveja hembra—tsonatá tziná.

P

Pacú—nicuœj-taj, T.
Padre—nojkia, P; **madre**—nocote y nocó (a) ckia; noj-kiá, P.
Padre de perro—cinójco-quiá, F; ojo *co*.
Paisano si es mío—heeh nu él, T
¿Paisano tuyo es aquel?—yájá él? T.
Paisano (compatriota)—nái-hniój, T; nái-n'hiój.

Paisano no es, es de otra nación nu-él-lidé, hunat él jlé-lé, T.
Paja (de)—quietzej. Ver: **Palma.**
Pájaro (castaño con esclerótica roja)—tzulutáje, M.
Pájaro (puntupí) — guuit-za-'hót, huén-tie, *vel* huen-quié, T; pl *éi.*
Pájaro en general—cuentiéi, huentiéi, F.
Pala de tejer—lohua-lanaj, T.
Pala, como doble remo por barreta—iiel-léj, F.
¿Palabras cuantas son?—tdé-hóte anahiil?
Palabras son dos—anahii hote joasi.
Palma—cué-tzéj, T; quiétzés.
Palma como abanico—cut zúc, P; Ver: **Abanico.**
Palmera—cotzuc, T.
Palo—ahló, F; hácló, hanló. Ver: **Romper (Rom).**
Palo Santo—hoc-loj, P; húc-lóo, T.
Palo de algarrobo—cu-ayiuj.
Palo tirante sobre cumbrera—to-pbálcainecque hi pbál-lá apé él, T.
Palo (cumbrera de techo)—to-pbálcainécque jle-tecquiú, T.
Palo fierro, «barba de tigre»—de hacer lanzas, arcos y flechas—nódtajèn: **Jacarandá.**
Palo de prender fuego—tzeheúcq —se le da vuelta encima de uno de chilca, F; nu-c-létéss T.
Paloma—hocuinathe, P.
Paloma—ucuinatáj, F; cuinatáj.
Paloma las. P volaron todas—ucuinátas hui-yó noquó, F; ojo al *as.*
Palomeia (pez)—nihuoec, era el dueño del pez, un Indio, nicuuoecq, T. Ver: **Pacú.**
Palomita torcaz—tsé-pep, T.
Palomita (general)—hoc-cui-natáj, pl. ss. T. pl. áss.
Palomo, pelea siempre—uccuinatáj lilonen—aquí es nombre de un perro grande que llamaron *cinojtáj*, F.
Pancita—la-tze, lo-tzé, T.
Pantalones—nokosed, P. Ver: **Chiripá.**
Pantalla—nu-hé-quiój, T.
Panteón de finados—tó-nó-'hotói, T.
Panza—tzel, pl. tzeliss, (a) hútzél. (La ó Lo-tzé, T).
Pañuelo—no hiú, F; nú-cu-i, T.
Pañuelo de taparse—é-tec-pbút.
Papa ó raiz parecida á mandioca—hôláj, F; la comen hervida ó asada.
Papel escrito—tóiáicnécque, T.
Para, esa agua es para el caballo inót latzí yelatáj h-lót, T.
Para, esta agua es para tí—inot latzi *hót* (*óht*) ám, T.
Para, este tabaco es para Granadero, aquel para mí, ese para tí yuic-cuássá Gr. lotze-hei (para que pite), yuicuas nuctzóe jlam tzilaj tojtzí atzôec am. Ver: **pitar**—h-lót (final.
Para—hót, hlói; óht.
¿Para qué?—op-kilá.
Párate, anda—ojcni, ocjni.
Parate (ponerse de pié)—jasete. Ind. Riv. cásít.
Párese—iajléc, F. Ver: **Volar,** de iaj-no; l-partícula relativa de 3ª. *ec* verbo ir.
Parir—ppéh. F.
Parte, (dividido lo que sea)—quietzáj.
Pasado (en el tiempo ó año aquel) jlup-yib-él, T.
Pasado (el año ó el invierno)—jlup ej-láj, F; jlup=epoca; *ej el*-otro; *laj-náj*-adverbio remoto. Ver: **Año, invierno.**
Pasado—éj-láj; (ó je) él-náji.
Pasado mañana—temló ícuála, T
Paseando, (voy paseando)—yopil calagüethi, P, está incluido *rancheria* ojo al *ca.*
Pasear—iiapil, P; this-sí-cai, T.
Paso ó tranco—td-hóss-cacni (de chimango), T.
Pasto—humena, P.
Pasto—hepp (?) F, 'hepp-léss, T; el campo es sin pasto—ajlú tsatquié, «campo limpio», F; Ver: **Quemar.**
Pati (pez)—ejquiétaj, M. H.
Pato de Castilla——hûoc-yéc-táj, T.
Pato—huoiáh ó huóoiáj, F; **pato picazo,** *vel*, hûoc-yiáj. Ver: **Chalana**—huc-yiáj, T.
Patron—nogüejcue, P.; Ni-hiát= **dueño,** F.
Patron del caballo—yelatáj toj loúécque, F. ojo **toj.**
Patron, decente y amigo—niyat, no-hüuécquè, T.
Pavo (doméstico)—ni-c-li-táj T. (c ó q). T. de castilla, huôc-yécitáj.

Pays, mi—noj-litáj, F. Ver: Buenos Aircs.
Pecho—nutucué. M. H.
Pecho, tetas de mujer ú hombre nu taquié.
Pedazo ó Punta—jlip, F. Ver: **Frazada.**
Pedazo, mitad—hlip.
Pedernal—itoj lú, F. ten-té ó itojló, M.°
Pedir—Ver Frases.
Péguele—aj, ahj, F.
Peinar—tretan, T.
Peine—tzú-niss, T.
Pelea, riña—ntoc—leíjeje, F; toc-léi, T.
Peleando—nolojnen, P.
Pelear, los perros estan peleando—cinottoj lilonas-sén, F. «El tój amenudo parece esté de gusto». F.
El perro pelea—cinój lilón, F.
Los perros pelean siempre—cinój lilonén péj, **en** «por qué muchos» (plural) dijo Faustino.
Pelícano—tza-hój. (Chajá).
Pelo—Ver: **vello y cabello.**
Pensando estoy—nun-ticquiencliu, T.
Pequeño, chiquito—lójsaj, tesicuágle, T.
Perder—tatoi, P.
Perdiendo—tatôi, P.
Perra—atcinoj-atziná, T.
Perro—sinoje P., sinój, asinój, T.
Perros—atcinós. T.
Perro de hocico largo—no-cuai, J.
Persona—nu tzán.
Pesca—ûoc-cói, uuc-cói-an.
Pesca (esta pescando)—inoj-coi, inotcoi, F.
Pesca grande—nihu'óc nimoiéc huahat—**«vamos á pescar y dormir,»** F.
Porqué se quedan á dormir á orillas del agua á donde les alcanza la noche, en esas pescas.
Pescado—yácsét (**fresco**—*nécquiayéc).* T. Ver: **Frases al fin.**
Pescado (asa el)—phõ yac-sét.
Pescado—yáhset, yácsét, T. pl, yacoetéss.
Pescador, es—yac-set-quia, pl. yac-set-cutzéss, T.
Pescuezo—nu pónf. M. H.
Pestañas—no-tecuiss. M. H.
Peste «(dentro tierra)»—nu-jnáyaj, ahót, T.
Pez en general—huahát, F.
Pica.—iuc-cu-iá.
Picadura de víbora—hotzáj lucáj, lucaq, F.
Picar—iukuác, F. Ver: **Boca.**
El mosquito me pica—yapiná yukuacmí, F.; Ver: **Zancudo, morder.**
Los mosquitos estan bravos—yapiná ucán, F.
Los mosquitos me picaron mucho anoche—yapiná iuhuác noj qunacquie, F.
Pícaro—quiat-lam-méj, T.
Pico—locnéss, F. Ver: **naris;** lopo-zét, T.
Pié—nu pacuí, lopachu. M. H. nutcoló, pl, ói
Piecito—nutcoló-cuáj, pl. tac-coloquiass, T.
Piedra—thunthé, P.; ténteh (pléi), T.
Pierna (toda)—notlokie, P.; nutlekié. M. H.
Pierna de ave—ahuen-tié le-quié, T.
Pierna de animal (toda)—c-lejquiéi, M. H.
Pierna de hombre—nut le quié. Ver: **canilla, pierna, parte inferior**—nut côló, M. H.
Pierna de caballo—yelatáj letquiéi, F.
Pierna en general—clet quiéi.
Piés—notkolói, P. Pié.s-*nut-colo*; pl. *ói* T.
Pimpin—nu-pém. T.
Pintarse—nolét, P.
Pintura de cara—nu-lé (mi), lalet (su, de él), T.
Piojo, piojito, piojón—jlá, jlacuass, jlá-lucué-táj, T.
Piojo—jlá. F.; sinalú. Alf. **Ver: comer, morder.**
Piojitos—hlá-cuáss, T.
Piolita—niióc-cuáj, T. ni-hióléss.
Piola—nyoccuí, P. Ver: **hilo, cháguar-nifócq,** T. pl. niiocói, nihióí.
Pirhua de algarroba—a-pé-cquié, T. pl. *éi.*
Pitar (imperativo)—huutze-cuà
Pitar un cigarro—nitzé'ji cigálo, P.; **¿te gusta pitar?**—¿háis tojluó tzecuá? P. **Mucho lindo (contesta)**—his, P.
Muy poco pito ó sé pitar tabaco—nucot nibhéh iucuas, P.
Planta en general—la-toc-lé, T.

Planta grande de algarroba—huayúc-toj-le-táj, T.
Planta de plata—huiái, T. Ver: **chaguar**—hui sería genérico. Ver: **Tabaco, hoja de la planta de plata**—hui-ái huoléi, T.
Plantita—la-toc-le-cuáj, T.
Plata—lecquiinat-thój.
Plato de comida—hclócq hiñ, T. Ver: **vaso de comer.**
Mi plato de comida—hoj-hojlócàhí, T.; nohclocahin; pronunciación difícil.
Playa grande—holotaj, T.
Playa chica—holotáj, lostaj, T.
Pluma de avestrus—uanc-loj úléi, T.
«Pluma de hacer» (cincel ó estilo) (?)—tó-tét-nec-quiá.
Plumas—ahuen-tié lo-huóléi, T.
Plumas — lohuoléi, T; lahúuis, M. H., **eran de un chimango.**
Plural. muchos—ndtócque, T.
Muchos cristianos—ciguélentoj ndtócque, ojo, al *toj*: es muy usado, T.
Muchos caballos — yelatáj toj ntoq, T.
Muchas ovejas — tsonatáj toj ntócque', T.
Dos ovejas—tsonatáj toj hotecoasi, T.
Dos cristianos—ciguéletoj hotecoasi, T.
Muchos cueros de vaca—uasetáj thójes tócque, T.
Dos cueros de vaca—uasetáj thójes ótecoasi, T. Ver: **cuero.**
Tres vacas—uasetáj laticuaiél, F.
Muchas vacas—uasétas ndtócq, F. ojo á la terminación *as* y al acento en *sé*.
Tres caballos—yelatáj laticuaiél F.
Muchos caballos—yélatás ntócq, F.
Muchas gallinas — houó ntócque.
Muchos perros—cinój ntócque, F.
Pobre—huenidé, P; **no tiene**, negativo.
Poco—chilatuá, P; tojélipá F. **Chico—un chico**—chileto.
Poco (un p.)—hlip-pe, T.
Poco es (de poquito)—catzi-huaj yáya, (ca-tzi-huaj-yáya).
Poco-es poco-deme más — toj catzia, ôm-à-uéj.
Pocote (una pasiflora, granadilla) —huh-nai, F.
Poder—sa-canìje.
Poder (no) — sacanigde. T; Ver. Frases.
Podrido—nahót ó nahóèt, T.
Polvo (del hombre)—loless, F. (?) noless. **Sperma.**
Polvo (del palo para hacer fuego) —lomoúcq, F; tal vez **polvo en general.**
Pólvora—letzéj mûque, F.
Polvos de yeso—ma-co-táj-muc.
Polvos molido, hebra—muc, Ver; **Harina, cosa molida.**
Pon otro—huéjla.
Pon otro pescado — huejla yacsete.
Poncho—nogüei, F.
Poncho chico — nogü'ei, nohuéi jlotzá, F.
Poncho grande—jlucueitá.
Poner—phô.
Ponerse, el sol se pone, la luna—huála yopil quielouéj; huelaj iei, ó, yopil quielouéj, F, Ver: **Volar, ir**, icuala iie'i iguelá ioèuí, T.
Ponerse, por hacerse—omai, Ver; **Anda á ponerte**, etc.
Póntela (de ropa)—equie toja, F; Ver, **Tome sombrero, espérate.**
Ponte el sombrero—tiphó, P; tal vez. **cúbrete.**
Por, causa de P.—P. tamenéj.
Por causa de—tamenejj.
Por—op, ob, hót, hlót.
Porongo—Tapai. I. R.
Poroto—omnie-táj, T.
Poroto del monte—oniaj, T.
¿Por qué (motivo)?—atdeyéke?
Por qué—optój? también por **ob causam,** obtój.
¿Por qué—atdeyej, attéyej, atthéi ecj, T.
Porta-mecha-yesquero — itój-'hi, nuca-itój-'hi, M.°
Pozo ó agujero — chuiéj, F; Ver, **Hoya.**
Prendas — ñhièi; **(algunas)** ima ñhiéi.
Prende el pañuelo—oit-téj a-huú **pañuelo**, T.
Prendedor, alfiler—nu- tucué hlélé. **(que carga en el pecho).**
Prénde—loc-ni, loj-ni.
Preñada—quiotzan, quiozan, F.
Prima—hualaniss, F.
Primavera — naguúp, F; Ver, **Agosto.**

Primo—nohualá, F.
Primo—huoclá, T.
Primo—nogüütugui, P.
Primos, as—nuquuiness, nuquuinoliss, T.
Prisioneros—ni-cuenc-cai.
Pronto, ligero—caelitt, F, é I. R.; se usa con imperativo, c-jaelitt.
Pronto—inatajj.
Pronto—paji déh.
Pronto trae—caelitá, I. R.
Puchero—noj-la-taj, cualquier **puchero de pescado**, F.
Puedo—ni-sa-caníg.
Puerta—hlapé, T; lapé.
Pulgar de pie ó mano—nu hués lucué, **é** abierta.
Pulso—nut cue huó.
Pulso, corazoncito — tdut-lé-cuáj, T.
Punta—jlip.
Puntalcito—titzon-cquiéinló, T.
Puntas de las costillas—nu-tzij-lilépéss, T.
Punta de planta que produce la flor—luc-jáss, T.
Puñalear—itzónú (**ha puñalado**).
Pupito—Ver, **Ombligo**.
Puse—nitijenaj.
Puta—a-móèc-cue, T.

Q

¿Qué—atde? hatdezu, T.
Quebracho colorado — quiaj-liujcui, P; estenúc,-cue ic-quiótquie, T.
Quebracho blanco—istenij, P; steny, M. H, stenúcque-pelaj-que. F
Quedar sin—
Pascual quedó sin mujer—**Pascual** laja quiécuá, F.
Quemar, en sus romances, el fuego quemará el pasto—itój iuhilá hépp, F; (**Va á quemar**).
Los indios han quemado los toldos—uiquii uenapé lohuéte, F; Ver, pelear por el *pe* y nublado.
¿Quién quemó el campo?—¿ajlun adhéj güè-nécq, F.
Yo lo quemé—nu-güen iquiáje, F; Ver. **quiero dormir. El campo está ardiendo** — ajlú uiho, F; *h* nasal. **Me he quemado**—noiú, F. **¿Te has quemado?**—itój hai pùh ó bpuh, F; u=où, Ver, Itója iphu.
Yo me he quemado—nojlam toiú. F.
El se ha quemado—hlam tohiph, F; ph-*p* soplada.
Nosotros nos hemos quemado—nojlamá, Vel; nojalam ipoùh, F.
Aquellos se quemaron — tohés touchén, F.
Querer—aitáj.
Querer-sus romances—
¿Me quieres? — al hemen nuia? F. **Te quiero**—nojhiémen am, F.
No te quiero—nam hemen am, F; Ver, **gustar**.
Te quiero, tu me gustas—ajhemén no, F.
Te quiero mucho—nai hemén, F.
Te quiero mucho á tí—nai-hemén am am, F.
¿Es cierto me querrás siempre? —hamato tojlohemenno?, F.
Cierto, contesta—mát, F.
Yo quiero tu hijita—ninoti osé, F.
Pascual quiere hacerme mal—Pascual oitáj hueién clin nó, F.
no Querer, no quiero—moltéj, I. R.
¿Quién?—atdéj, *vel* adtéj? (cuyo).
¿de Quién?—athec-lo?
¿Quién viene?—atdéj toj nom?
¿de Quién es aquel perro?—athec-ló cínoj latzí?
¿Quieres dormir conmigo?—halgóy tojnigùoy, T.
¿Quieres venir conmigo?—¿hal-néj-noya (né j?), F; Ver, **pitar te gusta? Voy, venid. Yo quiero venir contigo, vengo contigo**—noj-hieji-am-cuié, F.
yo Quiero dormir contigo — nojlam hoitaj nimójiam, F.
Quiero dormir—niguói nimójil am, F.
Quiero comer, estoy por comer—nojlam hoitáj nothechi, F. **El quiere comer** — hennó halolój nonquiéie, F.
Quiero tomar (?)—che-nuyó (?), P; Ver, **Beba**.
Quiero comer (?)—che-lipí (?), P; Ver. **Convida**.
Quiero descansar (?)—nocasíte (?), P; Ver, **párate**.
Quien — adhéj, F; atdéj, adtéj, T; Cuyó? atdec-ló, T.
Quiscaloro (opuntia)—latzáj, T.
Quiscaloro la fruta—latzajlái, T.
Quita (allá, para dar paso)—einjló, T.

R

Raíz como mandioca—hôláj, M.H.
Ramas—hlope-tsí, T; *hlo* **palo** *pé* arriba, *tsí* locativo y remate.
Ranchería, Rancho—nogüe'th'e ó nohuéte, P; hép-péi, T.
Rancho—nu-huet, hép, T.
Rancho (uno solo)—nouete oteji, F; Ver, **uno y ranchería.**
Rancho («unido»)—hépp. tuucquietáj, T.
en el Rancho—icanouéte, F.
Rancho—hepp, T; no-uét, T.
Rastro—tonoyj, F; noycque; de un indio, noyije, T.
Rastro de tigre—hayój noyíje, T.
Rastro de cabra—caila noyíje, T.
Raya—puj-lin, T.
Raya de concha — tdo-hués-Chin: **era de tortuga.**
Recien—necquiá. T; nequiè, F.
Recoger—thoccué, Ver; **Muchos.**
Recoger algarroba, mistol, chañar —thoccue huái, hoyáj, letzeni. F.
Red de 8 á 16 varas—huej-lu hútanáj, T.
Red—utanój M.; enotaná, F.; hútanaj, T.
Redero (el que las hace)—hutánahuu, T.
Refusilo—lep *vel* j-lép, T.
Reglas (está con las)—uuyiss hiyej (i-yej), T.
Regresé—tapini.
Reir—this-quiéi, T.
Reir—nhu isquieiej, F.; no-dhisquiéi, I. R.
Relámpago—iuc-lép, F.
Remedio—ckia.
Remedio—noca quiá, F.
Remedio para la China—tzinaquiá, F.
Remedio contra la víbora—huotzojquiá, F.
Repentinamente—ni-cquiejpho, T.
Resina de palo santo—hoc-liziej, M.
Resina otra clase—uhuc, M.
Retar, reconvenir—i-iét. Ver frases. T.
Retirado (más)—hom atuquiéi, T.
Reto—iietá, T.
Rico—tselátha, P.; bueno.
Rico (bueno)—coj, coh, F. y T.
Rico muy, muy bueno—acój, acoh, ojo al *a*, F.
Riña de gallos—hú-u toclei, T.
Río—Ver agua, P.
Río (Bermejo)—Teutáj, P.; teuctá, F.
Robando—escatiá, P.
Robar—iscát, F.
El Toba roba á los Matacos—Uanc-loi iscat Tucquii, T.
Los Tobas robaron al vapor—Uancloi iscat hépp, F.
Rodilla (de hombre)—num-camquié te, M. H.; clocam-quieté, era de un chimango, M. H.
Rojo—iquióte, P.; i-quiót, T.
Rompe—na-c-hos, ni-noc-hos.
Ropa—noca-iéjque, P. Ver camisa.
Ropero—nucohi.
Roto—nicúés, F., hi-quió, ihió, T.
Rueda—caguun lússáj, T.
las Ruedas (de la carreta)—caletá caguunlúss, T. Ver sombrero, de cuya forma deriva.

S

Sábalo (pescado)—yacséte, P.
Sábana—sa hál, P. Camisa de tela, sahal.
Saber, yo no—tdhá-yec (Manuel), tháiéj (I. R). No sé, no comprendo—noicaniécte, noicaniéj déh, F.
¿Sabes, comprendes?—halanej? F. Ver Comer quieres? Sé, comprendo—nio-hanéj, F.
Sable—matzetój, F. (machete); guardia del sable—lecquiiútec, F. Ver cabeza y cuchillo—Nucuuajnát, T.; matzetáj, T.
Sal—nisói, P. y F., *s* dulce.
Salir—Noyopil, F.
Mulato salió para sus toldos—Mº yopil cacni nohuét séi, F.
Los Indios salieron para los toldos—Yucquii yopil nohuéte.
¿Cuándo saliste de la toldería? —atlejque tojnatá? F.
Saltar—ti-yój-pho.
Salto, el verbo—tiója-pé, T.
¿Sanado ha?—alquies? F.; *a* de segunda persona é interrog.
¿Sanado ha la mujer?—¿quiécua hahiquiés, F.; *h* nasal.
Sancudo—iapiná, yapiná, F.; y=j toscana.
Sandía—ciguélel-lócque, T.
Sangre—huíis, F.
Sano ¿está sano?—quies?
¿Está sana tu mujer?—aquiecua quiés? F.
¿Sano estás?—iss c-lin?
Sano estoy—nu iss.

Santo, palo—hoc-lój, P.; acaso coj loj=palo rico.
Sapo—tojnaj, tocnaj ó totnaj.
Sauce—catóntaj, F.; Ver botador.
Sauces altos— catun-tácque—pitess, T.
Seco (muy)—tamquióí-nhiá, T.; hiá *ó* yá *ó* iá.
Seco, está—tomquióí, F.; *a* T.
El rio está seco—teuctáj tomquióí, F.
Seco—támaquióí.
Seco (está medio)—tamquioi niiapho ó nihiápho, T.
Sed (tengo)—nuquiim, nuküm, F.; niquüm, T.
Sediento—na-héê-lob-ló-néc, T.
Sembrad—teûc-cquiéi, T.
Semen—Ver Polvo.
Semilla de una enredadera de flores moradas—quiasetjlóc-luoi, M. H. (de trébol).
Semilla de achera—quieláj-lui, F.
Sentadero—nu huej quia lú, F.
Sentarse—nopapá, P. Ver Siéntate.
Señal—nutecnécque, T.
Sepultar un muerto—nutconquioyé, nuj hot-quioye, F. Ver Muerto, llorar.
Ser—de Faustino.
Yo soy bueno—noj-lam no is. Ver bueno, is; tú eres muy donosa) a-is.
Aquella es muy donosa—tojleitzi ya tsilatá (y=j toscana).
Los Indios son buenos—uicquíí ya is.
Nosotros somos buenos—nojlamil no is.
Los Indios son buenos—Yúcquii iés tsilatá.
Los Tobas fueron siempre malos—uanc-loi hoténi huitzáj;—te voy á matar—nailónjlá, nailonlá.
Sereno—yiáss ó teckiajái, T.
Serpiente—huotzéta, F.
Servicio, hacer—phál-tzénu, T.
Hágame el servicio de darme una cosa para darle á mi mujer—phál-tzénu huec-nú'ho jmaíc-cua nihuecnú nuquiécuá, T.
Si—conj.-quiá.
Si—heéq, hiéc, F.
Siempre — nic-quiej póm-péj, T. anitocque, I. R; de *a* superlativo, *nitocque* **muchas**.
Siempre—oteni, pej, F.
Ver: **comer, ser, pelear**—k-lam-méjj ó jlam-mejè, T; (de *j-lam* mismo, y *es* con).
Siéntate — aquiépo-phó, F; *ph*-p larga aspirada.
Quiero sentarme, voy á sentarme—vitáj nipohi-phó, F; ojo al *hi*.
Siga—mó.
Simból (paja)—hoèpy hepp. P; **neblina, vapor**, así parece.
Sin—laja, Ver, Frases.
Sobre—appé, pé, ppé.
Sobrina—huidoc, F.
Sobrina—cqniáió.
Sobrino—lec-ckie-ios, nu-huac-lá, T.
Sobrino—nohuítoc, F.
Sol-día—ijuala, P;—huála.
Solcito-arribita—tuj-pho, T; (como un algarrobito).
Soldado—ni-huu-táj, T; si es **Guarda Nacional** dicen: toj-litze soldao tá, soldao hihiyagtde- «aquel es soldado pero no soldado propio; T.
Solo (yo)— nojotéji, F; **¿Vas con alguno? No: solo**—atloi ijí? hcáh nojoteji, F.
Solo: vas ó eres sólo?—atloi-ije ó sea atloyje?, F.
Solo—tzílacq, tzíláca, tziláj, T.
¿Sólo vino Pepe? ¿Con quién vino Pepe? — atloi **ya Pepe**?—ó atloya?
Soltera (sin marido)—laja nochecua noj otejí, F. tal vez—«**no soy casada, yo solita**». **¿Eres soltera?**—am achécua ije, F. **No tengo marido**—laja nochecua yá, F **Si tengo marido**—ehc nochecua ije, F.
Soltera (sin marido)—laja quiega hùaji, F.
Sombra del muerto — hót peiácque, F.
Sombra — peiacq, F: **Sombra** física de cuerpo opaco, y **sombra** supersticiosa como en castellano—topé-yac; Ver, **espejo**.
Sombrerito—guun-na-cuaj, guunna los-sáj, T.
Sombrero—cagona. P; no-cahuoná, F; guucná.
Sombrero de paja—hu-ucná quuétzéj; T, **Palma**.
Sombrerón—guu-na-táj, T.
Sordo— quiotequiù, F; Ver, **Orejas**.

Subid—néh-phó, T.
estás Súcia tú — c-loc tá cquiui--lin, T.
Sucio—nucucaiéj, F; Ver, **Límpio**.
Suegra—nu-catelá, T; catelá.
Suegro—nu-kióti, T.
Sueño tengo—numó, P.
Sueño (tengo)—nohatilomó, F.
Suitáyaj-amor. Pedro se ha matado por amor—peilo li-lón-j-lam suitáyaj taménnej.
Sunchal (ó yuyo parecido)—itzonój, M.
Suri—Ver, **avestrúz**.
Surubí (pés)—halóâj, ha-láj, I.
Surubí—a-lajè, pl, alàss, T.
Suyo—tojleitzí-caló, F; **Suyo (de él)**—la-ló, la-hló, T.
Suyo, aquella es suya—tojlein lolot toj-zié, F.

T

Tabaco—íú-cuuás, yucuass iujuás, P; Ver, **comer, picar, morder y cháguar**, planta en general—tal vez planta que se muerde, ó de **quemado**—*iú*, con diminutivo.
Tal vez—elát, F. y T, pbiye, hpiye ni-quiéc-phá, T.
Talon—nupoké, M. H.
También — op, hiséj, úith, güith, huuidh, T; j-lón-yá. 'hóté, yísi.
Tápate la cara — mphú-phé á-téi, Ver; frases.
Tápate luego—huog-hueya, F.
Tapir—yelaj.
Tardar—le-toi.
Tarde es ya—hu-naj, T.
Tardíc, lento—hunajj.
Tas—hualaiúcj, F.
Té (acusativo), ai *ó* hày; (dativo) á-mu.
Techo ó corona de casa— jlé-tecquiú, T.
Tejedor—toyicque-huu, T.
Tejido—huesáj, F.
Tejido hecho, «que está hecho»—toj-ic hicquioma huá-cal, T.
Tejido en urdimbre que no está concluido — toj-tem-phó can-ni unc-ca-jlá, T.
Tejiendo—toyicque, tipotzin, T.
Tela, pedazo de lienzo—sahal, F; Ver, **Camisa, ropa**.
Telar—nocaléi, F; **Tejer, (que venga á)**—potzin ay'cque, F; Ver, **Torcer, ir. Las chinas tejen los ponchos** — Tzinai potzintié nogüéi, F; **que vaya á tejer**—potzin ay'cque. F. **Voy á poner el hilo en el telar**—nita-tanlo nocaléi, F
Temblor—hun-nat hua'jí, T.
Temer (tener miedo)—nu-huuái, T.
Temprano es—inàtáj.
Tener—¿tienes cueros de lobos?—haluén latatáj htój? F; thój *t* aspirada, ojo al *hal*. **Tengo** (contesta)—nigü'en, F; *ni-no-nu*. **Tengo sueño**—no-hatilocnô, F. **Huevito tiene tres mujeres**—Nigü'egüi ichécuas lacticüáiel, F. **Mulato tiene muchos hijos**—M° 'oles-senn-tocque, F; Ver, **mucho**. **Mulato tiene muchas hijas**—M° lolessás tziná ntocque, F; ver, **Hija**. **Roldan tiene muchos hermanos**—Tsetaj quiilaliss ndócquè, F. **Mulato tuvo muchas mujeres** — M° gü'énti-zichec[illegible] ntóque, F. **¿Tienes huevos de gallinas?**alogüèn h'ohùó let-quiél?, F. **No tengo**—namüén, F. **¿Tienes vacas?**—aluén héasetáj? F. **¿Tienes mujer tú?**—alchócua 'hije-(*h* nasal), F. **No tengo**—huenide, I. R. **Tengo calor**—quieüj ilón-nu, T. **¿Tiene vacas Mulato?**—a M° güen huasetáj? F.
Terreno poblado—aicómo, **tierra, población ó pueblo**
Tía, mi. tú, etc—nu-uidó-jè, a-uidóje, T.
Tiempo-(época)—quiép
Tiempo malo—huala catzija, F
Tiempo de, él....—icquié....
Tiempo mucho—paj-cquié
Tiempo de algarroba — iya-quiép, T.
Tiempo de la algarroba— yacquiœ'p tojhuá-ic-quie, T.
Tiempo del chañar —tojletzéniiu, T; **Chañar maduro**.
Tiempo del mistol— tajahoiáj icquie, T.
¿qué Tiempo hace?—tde-hóte hnat (hunát, **tierra, noche**)— tde-hote poèlé (**cielo, día**). T; Según es de noche ó de día.
Tienda (guarda prendas)—mañhié huet, toc-lohcqhuet: **este-guarda víveres**.
Tierra, greda para ollas—i-n'hiót, T.
Tierra—hunati, P; hunát, T.
Tierra, terreno poblado—aicómo, P.

Tigre—aii'ój, P; *ii*=y española; ay-ój, T; Ver. Avójethoj.
Tinaja—tojuej (1ª *j*=*h*).
Tía—uidóje.
Tío, mi, tú, etc—nu-uitoc, a-uitoc, T.
Tirante—to-phálcainécque, jlé-lecquiú.
Tirante encima del otro—'hipbal -lá apé-él.
Tirar (arrastrar)—titlin-tot, T.
Tobas de la Boca del Bermejo—'huane-lot, F; Ver, **Orejudos, Tobas del Teuco.**
Tobillo—Ver: **Nuez del pie.**
Toca—hén-quié, T.
Tócalo—quiuma.
Tocador de pinpin—nuca-hutzoéc, T.
Todas - noque, F; Kichua, *tucui*.
Todavía—camaj, T.
Todo—lac-cuno.
Todos—inuc-atzi, ijluc-cuntzi, nucuu. ij-luc-cúno, T; nuh-húu *vel* nu-huó, T.
Todos vamos—aquiimóh nán-nujtzi, T.
Toma el sombrero y póntelo—quiema huonatzi tip-ho, F; *ph* entre *p* y *b* soplada y lerdas.
vamos á Tomar—acquií nayot, T: =beber.
Tomen—iiot, T.
Torcer ó hilar—potzin, F.
Tortuga—toncquiitané, Chin.
Tos—cocojtás, F.
Tosca ó tierra—teutéj, M.
Trabaja—quium, *vel* quiûem-c-lin T; **trabajad muchachos**—quelit acquiémet (ligero), F
Trabajar—utó, huitó.
Trabajar, no podemos trabajar—nutsacamiecte nuquiemet, F. **Hemos trabajado bastante**—nutquiemjlin tócque, (mostrando), F.
Trabajar, trabajaremos mañana—nutquiemjlina quiicuála, F; **Los Indios van á trabajar á las haciendas**—uiiquii ia'qu'go Cigüéli, F: Ver: **Cristianos**. Ver: **Ir** *q* nasal. **Vamos á trabajar muchachos**—acquynat quiemlin, F.
Trabajen—quiûem-uit-tó.
Traer—atquiój, acchquiój.
Traer, traigame fuego—Miei itój hlacanat itoj: «anda caminando le llama porque traiga fuego», F. **Traigame fuego**—huochecua (?) achój, P. **Vaya á traer**—miei, F.
Traiga por acá—hlacanat, F: ojo al *la* de persona. **Traelo te lo compraré**—atquiój niquiój lá, F.
no se Tragan todo—iaj-loconquió.
Trampa de mimbre para pescar—to-bhuúc: pl. tobhucuf; dim. tobhucucuyass, T.
Trébol—quierláir loj M: quiuaserlócque,, comida del ciervo, F: quiiuasset-lóc, T.
Trenzar—ipotzin, T; Ver: **Tejer.**
Tres-(3)—laticuaiél, F; lajctihuaiel-l, T.
Trigo—dtán-tan, T; dtán-tán.
Tripitas—cosl-ei, T.
Tronco—ha-lo-quiû, T.
Truena—peslayp, F; pél-lái hi-pén T.
Tu (y tí?)—am, ó ham, F; Ver: **Gram.** áhm, casi ham, T.
Tuco (bicho con luz)—huitonáj, M H.
Tuya (esa es tuya)—alotó-jigüe, F.
Tuyo—cató, F; a-c-hó, ác-hó, T; ah-c-hó, ac-ló.

U

Ucle-la planta—quia-hó-teûc, T.
Ucle, la fruta—quio-hót, T.
Ucle, la cáscara—tdój, T.
Ucle, la carne—tizan, T.
Ucle, la semilla—jlui, jluiquiass, T.
Un cristiano— Cigüéle hotejí, F; numerales siempre son subfijos.
Uno—otejji, P; hoteji, parando el índice, F; hotecoaji, T.
Uña (de pie ó mano)—thoj, M. H; nohúhodóg, M; Ver: **Cuero.**
Uña—nucuuéj *vel* ntój, *vel* nthój, *vel*, ndhój, T.
Uñas (de ave(—lecués heés, M. H; Ver: **Dedos.**

V

Vaca—quiuas-setaj, T.
Vaca—huaséteje, P; (viva).
¿Vaca tienes?—aluen: huasetáj?
Vacas—quiuuas-sétáss, T.
Vacuno (animal)—huasetág, F.
Vagre (pez)— huajnóla, P; huac nuc-*la* T. pl. *as*; huajnocuá F; huat-nuc-lá, M.
Vaina de cuchillo—lecquiinaj 'hi T
mi Vaina—nucatnat'hi, T.
Vale, no—hahí ddéh: *dd* aspirada.
Vale, el cuchillo este no vale hahí ddéh quiinácque.

Valiente, más es Granadero que Mulato—Gr. ehomta c-hajái *hote hide* (no como) **Mulato**, T.
Valiente hombre—quiihiél niiat, F; táccájái T. *(ó)*.
Valientes, los—*tác*-ca-hién, T. (*ó*)
Vamos á cazar—atquié eyque.
Varas, las—sijhú lilei hepp.
un Varon y un China—icnu uit ó jib atzina, T.
Vaso, mí—nojloc ti, «mi plato de beber», F; Ver: **plato, agua**.
Vé, ahí—húec-ni, T.
Veces (algunas)—tajny (?) P.
Veces, 2, 3, etc—hoté joasí, lacti cuáyel, T.
Vecino—tocueitde (no léjos).
Vello, en general—nu-pe-séi, T.
Vello, de las partes—nu-jlú-hueléi, T.
Vellón—huolei.
Venas—nuzóte, M. H.
Vencer—jojonnej, F; iucus, iucós, M. **Vencerá á Huevito**—M. cohknihiá Nihuehu, F. **¿Quién venció?**—adhej tojjo jonnej (derrotar) F. T. **te venció**—T. jojonnéj am. F. T. **me venció**—T. jojonnej nojlam. F. **Yo vencí á los Tobas**—nojlam novucús Uanc-loi, F. **Mulato venció à los Tobas**—Hiuescós iucós Uanc-loi, F. **Nosotros vencimos à los Tobas**—nojlam iúcús Uanc-loi, F. **Los Tobas nos vencieron**—Uanc-loi iucós nan, F.
Vender, véndame ese chiripá—uecnojo cosét niquioj, F. **deme el chiripá lo compro. Véndame todas las ovejas**—atquióje tsonáta niquióje, (traiga ovejas las compro), F. **Véndame una oveja**—atquiójé tsonatá niquiojlá, otejé: (traiga ovejas compraré una), F. **Véndame un tu caballo te lo compraré**—atquiójloí quiéje notquióje lá yelataj otéjé, F. **Los Tobas nos vendieron muchas gallinas**—Uanc-loi uecnójo hóuó ntóc nojlamil, F. **Véndame**—uecnójohloi, F. «Véndeme el caballo te lo voy á comprar»—uecnojo hloi yélatájé niquióje quióje aiej, F. Ver: **Comprar**.
Veneno—kakia (no remedio *ckia*); tiuicquia, T.
Vengo—non-nom, nojnom, F.
Venir, ¿de donde vienes?—antoclin, antó-h-lin, Alf. **El viene**—tojleitzi nequié nom, F; Ver: **Aquel**. **Venid**—atchinoicque, F; achucaná *(peones)*. **Viene**—nom, F; tol-lei. **Venir de**—toll-cá. **Vengo de la Colonia**—nítal-cacni Colonia, séi, Alf. **Venir**—nom. **Vengo de allà**—nital cacní, Alf.
Venus—igüeláj loyaj-lín y catess. Ver: **compañero**. Estrella compañera de la luna.
Ver—alogüen, F; nu-huenn *(veo)*. **Yo he visto á los Tobas**—nojlam nigüen Uanc-loi F; **Estoy mirando á los Tobas**—iectojnigüen Uanc-loi, F; **Visto, ¿lo has visto al Comandante?**—halhuéné Comandante? **¿Has visto à los Tobas?**—alogüen Uanc-loi? F. **Los he visto**—éeh nigüen, F. **Yo no los veo**—namugüen, F; *(g medio comida)* **¿Adonde están?**—ije? F. *j* nasal. **Allá**—ueleitzi, F. **Allà están los Tobas**—Uanc-loi ije toj-leitzi, F. **No veo palomas**—namuén tsitocué, F.
Verbena colorada—tzamú, M.
Verano—iaquiep, F.
Verde—huacháne, P, caté T, yitd, T.
Vez (otra)—yiip, yib nicquiéphó *ó* yib loc-cjai, T.
Viajar—**Roldan hizo muchos viajes**—Tsetaj necué inót ndtoc, (viajes por agua), F.—**Roldan viajó una sóla vez**—Tsetáj necuí inót otejcuí, F.
Víbo (pez)—tzutás F.
Víbora—chasquietáje, P; huátsáje, F. Ver Serpiente, M.
Víbora negra—tsetquiúcuá, F.
Victoria—táj-cuá, F. Ver Vencer.
Vieja (pez)—iuhuis, M; í-guuiss *vel* i-huuíss, T.
Viejo—nochoht, P; niquiéhte, F.; F; *eh* prolongado, heiquiété, T.
Viejo (muy)—a-nouemquietá, F.
Viento—in-huoccque, T.
Viento (que hace V.)—in huóc, T.
Vilela—Quiatzú.
Vilelon—Quiatzu-táj.
Vinal—attécke, áttécque T; el fruto, attácke, at-táje, T; aloja de vinal—at-táj lictzi.
Vino—falta.
Violeta (el color)—icquiáláj, T.
Visita de los muertos—aséitcass, T (al que recien muere).
Visita (visitador)—tzi-hiácque, T.
Visitas—tzi-cáss.
Viuda—laja checuáyá, F.
Vivero de pescado—yacsette-hi.

Vivo (que vive)—ilói, F.
Volar, el loro voló—elé matycque, F.—**El loro se ha volado**—elé hiuyó, F.—Un Indio cazando me dijo: *yeque* por, hûijó).—**Las palomas volaron todas**—ucuinátas huiyó noquó, F.—**Está por volar**—iutaj hui yojli, F. Ver ir—**Párese**—iajléc, F.
Voltear, el caballo me ha volteado—yelatáj locnó, F.
Volver—tapil.
Volverá—topilá, F—**¿Cuándo va á volver Vd.?**—¿quiejoté jtapil? F—**Volveré dentro de un mes**—notpintlá hualá, F. Ver Luna y dos frases abajo—**Volveré mañana**—notpintlá, quiicuála, F.—**¿Cuándo volverá el vapor?**—quiehoté pil hepp? F—**Volverá dentro de un mes**—topileilá huelá, F—**Quiza yo pueda volver dentro de un mes**—elá notpiléi huelá, F.—**Los Tobas volvieron á sus ranchos**—Uanc-loi topililouéte, F—**Los Tobas volvieron á nuestros ranchos**—Uanc-loi jlauéte, F—**Anda y vuelve pronto**—opil topiléilá quelit, F. Ver Pronto—**Volverá Pepe mañana**—Pepe nomlá quiicuála, F—**Ayer volvió Pepe**—Pepe nomé tojnahaque, F—**Espérate voy á volver aquí**—taquié haote tapil caná, Alf.
Volved aquí mañana—tapil caná iquála, Alf.
Vosotros—amáh, F, amdtócque, lamilitoc, Alf.
Vosotros—amah; icnamil *ó* amil, T
«**Voy á paseando**»—yopil calagüethi, P. Ver: Ranchería.
Voy á pescar—nhû uojcoi, F. Ver Pesca.
Voy á venir, espérate—nhû *vel* nhi taquié, F.
Vuelca aloja en el mate (i. e. llena el mate con aloja)—tzucniú cu-aj uutzotajtéss, T.
Vulva—los-sôc.

Y

Y—isiquiéi, F.
Y, con—uuith, uuitd, c-loya.
Yacaré—halotage, P; ah-lóctaj, T. Ver Palo.
Ya . . . no—iném (ver latir).
Yegua—yelatáj tz-iná, F. Ver Anta, caballo.
Yerba—Ver yuyo.
Yerno—nu-huá-ve nécque, T.
Yesca (de cerda)—nocaitoj-léss, F. Ver: Pedernal, flechero, eslabón, cuernito.
Yeso—ma-co-taj, T.
Yeso, polvos de—ma-cotaj muc, T.
Yesquero—nocaitôjni, F. Ver Cuernito.
Yica dibujada—'helé téc-lès-séi, T.
Yica, bolsa de red de varios tamaños—hélé, F; 'hélé, T.
Yo—nojlan, F y T; háote (¿como tú?) Alf. Ver Gramática.
Yuyo—Ver Yerba—hac-ló huulé, T. Ver arbol y hoja.

Z

Zambulle, zambullir—putzaj, nathinquió (th—casi inglesa).
Zancudo—Ver Sancudo.
Zapallo—et-squiin, T.
Zapatería—nissohésschuet.
Zapatero—ni-zohess-huu (el que los hace), T; nissohésse-hi (el que los vende).
Zapato—nizót, P. sot.
Zapato para pisar—nizoj not-si, P.
Zapato voy á ponerme el de pisar—nojtsi no nizohéss, P.
Zorro—magóu, P; magú, T.

VOCABULARIO MATACO-ESPAÑOL

A

A—tú-amah-vosotros.
Acchquioj—traer.
l-Accuno—todo.
A-c-has—crudo.
A-c-hó—tuyo. Ver: Tuyo.
nol-Aclín—llorar (un muerto). Ver: Gritar, hacer.
Ac-lo—tuyo.
Ac-ló—Arbol. Ver: **Ha-lo**.
Acquynat quienlin—Ver: Telar.
Adéj tojilon?—¿quién le ha matado?
Adej—quien. Ver: Quemar.
Adhéj jlenéque hnocioj?—¿quién hizo la chalana?
Adhej tojjojonnéj?—¿quién venció? Ver: Derrotar.
Altés?—¿quién?
Ahlo, hácló, hanló—palo. Ver: Romper.
Ahót, ahot-toj-la-yas—finado, finados.
A-hót—Dios, Diablo, etc.
A-huen-tié—Ver: **Huentié**.
Ai—te (acusativo) prefijo.
Aicomo—terreno poblado, tierra, población ó pueblo.
Aiiój, ii—y española, no porteña—tigre.
lája Aiojè—no hay (ningún) tigre.
Aipotzelai—lucero (estrella).
Aitaj—casi. Ver: **Oitaj**.
Aitaj, Oitaj—querer.
Aitć—algarrobo: **cuayuj**—palo de algarrobo; tal vez de otro color.
Aj—prefijo de 2ª persona. Ver: **aj-Hemén;** e interrogativo.
Aj, ahj—péguele.
Ajlé—iguana.
Ajlá—afuera.
Ajlu, ajlú jlocuaita: úeuú—campo, campo grande; grande.
Ajlú iú'ho—h nasal—el campo está ardiendo.
Ajlú jlocuéita—campo grande. Ver: **Halotaje**.
Ajlun adhéj güenécque?—¿quién quemó el campo?
Ajlú-tsat-quié—el campo es sin pasto—«campo limpio».
Al—prefijo de 2ª persona. Ver: **Hal y Al-hemen**.
A-lajè—surubí.
Alinè—aquel.
A-luj-tájhiquié—campo quebrado
Am—pronombre personal de 2º caso, régimen pospuesto.
Am—no, (prefijo primitivo é interrogativo.
Am-tem-naj—cómo estás?
Am: am tem najless?—¿cómo está tu familia?
Am ó ham—tú (y tí).
Am-a-chécua i'je?—¿eres soltera? lit: ¿no tú esposa eres? *vel:* no tú marido tienes?
Amáh, amdtócque, lamilitoc—vosotros.
Amic-co—amigo.
Amil—vosotros.
Am-oéc-cue—puta.
Amor-suitayaj—Pedro por amor se ha matado—**P. lilónj-lam suitayaj taménnej**. J.
Amúh locné—lastimado.
Amu—te, á tí (dativo subfijo).
Am-úh: nuca-amúh—no bueno; las-

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timado (á la nuez del pié, indicándola).
Am-th, ó, iél-l—enfermo.
Anahli, hote joazi—palabras son dos.
Aniequiil—moco.
Anitocque—siempre; (muchísimo?)
Anjloj, nojanjloj—huso.
Antoc-lin?—¿de dónde vienes?
A-nozemquietá—muy viejo.
A-pé-cquié—pirhua de algarroba.
Appe, pé, ppé—sobre.
Aquiimók-nán-nuj-tzi—todos vamos.
Aquinasetáj 'hije?—¿hay vacas en la soledad y nasal.
Aséh, asaque—dorado (pez).
Asáp — lagartija como iguana chica.
Aséit-cáss—visita de los muertos.
Asnácque—macho, mulo.
Asnajj—macho.
Asnam—ciego.
At-aj litzí—aloja de vinal.
Hom Ataq-uiái—muy léjos. T.
Atchinoique, achucaná—(peones) Venid. Ver: Chinoicque.
Atde?—¿qué?
Atdeiecque?—¿porqué?
Autiój—¿quién?
Atdej lenécque helé?—¿quién dibujó esta yica?
Atde-tzá?—¿cómo?
Atdéyej, attéyej—¿porqué?
Atdeyéke?—¿porqué (motivo?).
Atdeyjc?—¿cómo?
Atjléi niiat?—¿cómo se llama el dueño ó patrón?
At-j-léi-am, vel ateleihiam—¿cómo te llamas?
Atjléi niiat?—¿cómo se llama el dueño del caballo?
Atjléi caniat?—¿cómo se llama el cacique?
Atocnèite, cat-hiu-tha—cerca; lit: muy-lejos-no.
Atójzi—lejos (muy).
Atojói—léjos (muy).
At-p-léi-am—¿cómo te llamas?
Atquié-eyque—vamos á cazar.
Atquiój—traer.
Atquiójonéi inóte ni-hiát—lleve agua al patrón. Ver: **Onéi**.
Atquiójónéi niiat inóte, jloié inóttaj—lleve agua y caña al patrón.
Atteáck—vinal, el fruto.
Attécke—vinal, el árbol.
Atthéiécque—¿porqué?
A'-tá-pho—alto (muy).
Atzaj—membrillo del monte.
Atzé—deme.
Ayój dtój, dhoj—cuero de tigre. Ver: **Thój**.
Ayóje-th'ój—cuero de tigre.
Azoléala—azul.

B

Balaña — cara. Ver: **no-Tialú, quialó**.
Boaláj—león.

C

nu-Ca—mi horcon.
nó-Ca—puesto, frontera. Voz castellana.
nu-Cá-àmúh—lastimado en la nuez del pié.
Cacaunój—flor de la miel.
to-Cá-cquié-te—horcon del otro.
Yaj-Cael—ande: tal vez «no pare».
Caelitá—trae pronto.
Caelitt, quelit—ligero. La terminación **it** debe ser negativa: entonces lit: «pare no».
Cagona—sombrero.
Caguunlúsáj—rueda.
no-Cahuoná—sombrero.
nu-Ca-hutzeùc—tocador de *pimpín*.
no-Ca-yejque—ropa.
Cailá—cabra. (Castellano como *Peilo* de Pedro).
Cainu-juahá—chico.
Cainu-lása—chicos, as.
no-Caitó—lapiz (tisa).
no-Caitojlóss—yesca (de cerda). Ver: Pedernal, eslabón, cuernito, flechero.
no-Caitojni—yesquero. Ver: Cuernito.
no-Caitojquía—eslabón (para fuego). Ver: Pedernal, yesca y remedio.
nu-Caj, ó, nocaj—boca de hombre.
lu-Cajleyché—lengua (física). Nocten-**caj**-liquin; era de un chimango.
nu-Ca-jlo-jié—lengua (física) **nu-caj-lo-kié**.
nu-Ca-la-huet—mi huso.
to-Ca-lé-huét—huso.
no-Caléi—telar.
Calondana—estrella grande, lucero.

Camaj—todavía.
Camajnitocque—falta mucho (todavía mucho).
Can-nuhiss—caña hueca.
hla-Canat—traiga por acá.
noi-Caniécte, noicaniéjdeh—no sé, no comprendo.
no-Canjlój—huso. Ver: Telar.
Canó, hanót nucanú, canú—agujã.
i-Canouéte—en el rancho; ojo al **i**, probablemente locativa.
num-Camquieté—rodilla (de hombre); **c-locamquieté**—era de un chimango.
no-Caquia—remedio
Casca-huera — bastante (gente). Ver: **infra-c-cien**.
Caskayar—cien; Ver. bastante.
no-Casite—descansar; Ver. párate.
no-Casite (?) — quiero descansar; Ver. párate; y. **Jasité**.
Casit omatet-laj nut-xi,—descansá, párate, etc.
Cástácque—armado, pez, T.
Castác—armado (pescado).
nu-cásup-há—tobillo. Ver. Lastimado.
is-Cat—robar.
cátai, Cátei—cocina.
Ca-té—verde.
Catelá—suegra.
no-Catéla—abuelito.
Catéss—estrella en general.
Cat-hú-tha—cerca.
es-Catiá—robando.
Catin—baila.
tojleitxi Cató—suyo; Ver. mio *catá*, posesión en general.
la-Cató (ó **nojcató**?)—mio.
la-Cató—nuestro ó mio; Ver, mio.
Cató (?)—tuyo.
Catontáj sauce.
no-Catotója—mio, es mio esto; Ver. mio, este.
Catquieù—creer; Ver, frases, Creer.
Catú—cancha. vuelta; Ver, Codo.
Catú huális-sije—cuatro canchas.
nu-Catú—codo; Ver, rodilla.
Catú-tahuáj — cerquita (vueltita); Ver, **Txi-tdé**.
Ca-txia, ca-tchia, catchya—malo, feo, poco.
Catxihuaj yaya—poco (es): poquito es.
nu-Ca nicquii—mi familia.
a-Ca nicquii—tu familia.
la-Ca nicquii—su familia.
Cco—madre.
Ciequá—esposa.
Ciequa-yó: lit—con esposa, tener esposa.
Ciguéle hotoji—un cristiano.
Ciguelentoj ndtocque — muchos cristianos.
Ciguéletoj hotecoasi—dos cristianos.
Cilaj—solo.
Cinój—perro; Ver, **Sinoje**.
a-Cinój aliné aitaj i-pel-ji—aquel perro casi es blanco.
Cinójco—madre de un perro.
Cinójcoquia—padre de un perro.
Cinojiél—perro lastimado.
Cinój lilon el perro pelea.
Cinój lilonen pej—los perros pelean siempre—«*en*, porque muchos»—dijo Faustino.
Cinojloss—hijo de perro.
Cinój ntócque—muchos perros.
Cionaj—gama.
Cjamáj—Ver, **Camaj**; T.
Ckáh—no.
Ckáiuúya—es loco. **lit-no**-hombre-**es**: no más hombre es.
Ckía—remedio.
lec-Ckila—hermano.
Ckinno—hermana.
Ckiú—araña.
Ckui—dentro.
ic-Ckulá—hermano.
C-lajphú—muslo (parte superior de pierna) de animal, sí de hombre, con *no* prefijo.
no-C-lam—evacuar.
C-laní—largar.
C-lejquiei—pierna de animal (toda)
C-lemchitá—laguna.
C-lin—estar.
ni-Cli-taj—pavo doméstico.
C-ló-'hi ytoya—cartucho (guardabala).
C-loya, úuitd—con *yá* (subfijo).
no-Cness—nariz
Co—subfijo, forma genitiva, e. g. **cinójco quia**—padre de perro.
nu-Có—madre. Ver, **Cote**.
no-Coáj—chico, muchacho.
Cocojtás—tos.
Cocua (?) frio (tiene frio).
nu-Co'hi—ropero, baul; T.
M Cohknihia Nihuehú—M. vencerá á Huevito.
inoj-Coy, inotcoi—pesca, (está pescando).
Coj, coh (?) rico (bueno).
a-Coj, ó acoh—muy rico, muy bueno.
Cojtet—martin-pescador (ave).

nut-Coló—pie, pl, ói.
nut-Cŏló—pierna, parte inferior.
nut-Colo-cuaj—piecito.
tacColo quiass—piecitos.
t-Coloi, coloi-—canilla, parte inferior de la pierna.
ai-Cómo—tierra, población ó pueblo, terreno poblado.
Coqui—limpio.
no-Cosète—chiripá; Ver, calzoncillos, pantalones; *s* dulce.
nu-Cosl-ei—tripitas.
nu-Cot nibhéh iucuas—muy poco pito, ó sé pitar tabaco.
no-Cote—madre, ver, **co**.
Cotuntáj—botador; Ver, sauce.
Cotzuc—palmera.
Cqúhíass—jugad.
Cquiaió—sobrina.
le-Cquié—naveta para trama.
Cquiété— (œ)—horcon.
le-Cquiila tojasnacque—hermano mayor (le dice el hermano menor).
Cquiœl—contesta.
a-Cquiojj-c-lin—canta.
lo-Cesé—hijo.
a-Cquynat quiemlin—vamos á trabajar muchachos.
Cuaca—llama (de fuego).
nu-Cucaiéj—sucio.
Cué—«andate. Ver; Mocué, Mohué.
noj-Cuéchú—apuntar escribiendo; Ver, Lapiz.
nut-Cué húo—pulso ó muñeca; T **húo-gúo**.
nut-Cuéi, nojcuei avam-brazo.
nut-Cuéi nutcueséj— avam-brazo, parte superior.
to-**Cueitde**—vecino (no léjos).
Cué, kié, ycke,, écke, eck—con.
nut-Cué-lé-lé—armas.
Cuentié-haj—boca de pájaro.
Cuentiéi—pájaro en general; Ver, **Huentiéi**.
Cuentié-téi—ojos de pájaro.
Cué-quiaj—manco (manito).
Cu-équiatas—indios de Huevito.
ni-Cúés, hi-quio, ihió—roto.
lecués hoès—uñas (de ave).
Cué-tzéj—palma.
nut-Cueyel—la otra mano.
no-Cuí—corona (de lo que sea); **cuí**—dentro.
Cu-iel-là, qhiel-laj— achera (**quiellocque**, acaso **locque** — comida) raiz que comen.
lac-Cúno (?)—todo.
(Cuój-quiáje) Cuoj-quiáje—chalana.
Cutzúc—abanico de palma.
Cuuajnat—sable.
Cuuichája, huitsáj—malo. Tal vez de: *uh* vel *hu*, bueno; ó bien, *it* negativo, *tzaj*, *chaj*, subfijo adjetivante, que combina con el *tzaj*, *chaj*, *quiaj* dar.

CH

Chaj, tchaj, zaj, tzaj, quiáj, tquiáj—subfijo adjetivante, tal vez del verbo *dar*.
Chalát—lagartija.
Chaquitoje—convida (pidiendo).
Chasquiètaje, huatsáje — víbora. Ver: Serpiente.
huo-Checua (?) achój — tráigame fuego.
Checua—marido.
ehc no-Checua i'je—sí, tengo marido.
am a-Chécua i'je?—¿eres soltera? am—no interrogativo.
laja no-Chécua yá—no tengo marido.
no-Chécuoa—mujer.
Chelipe—convida.
Chelipí—quiero comer. Ver: Convida.
Chenuyó—quiero tomar. Ver: Beba.
no-Cheyé—hambre tengo.
nu-Chicnó, noquninij — hermano (mi), *cui*, más dulce.
Chiguéle guil-l-nén—los cristianos están enfermos.
Chiguelé lonlá Uancloi—los cristianos matarán á los Tobas.
Chigüélin jojonnej Uancloi—los cristianos derrotaron á los Tobas.
Chihuéle, chigüele—cristianos.
Chilatuá, tojélipa—poco, Toba Calotá.
Chileto—chico, un chico.
a-Chimó, opil, yopil—«andate».
Chinácque—carnero; *chi* por *tsi*.
at-Chináique—venid (peones).
Chiuasset—siervo.
Chiú-uéck—medio, en el medio.
a-Chóc-lej yucúas, ó, acquiój—deme tabaco.
al-Chocua: hije—mujer tuya. ¿tienes mujer ó está tu mujer?
no-Chôht, ñiquiéhte—ver: abuelito viejo—*eh*—*e* prolongado.
a-Choj itoj—deme fuego.
a-Chóje, acquiój—deme.
a-Chój itój—deme fuego.

Chona, tsoná—corzuela. V.: oveja.
na-Chos, ni-nochoss—rompe, (yo romperlo).
no-Chóti—abuelito.
no-Chotéi, nuquiotéi—ovejas del hombre.
al-Chouca 'hije?—¿tienes mujer tú? —*h* nasal.
Chquiá icuála—hasta mañana.
a-Chucana—venid (peones).
Chucuòitaj—hace calor.
Chucuotaj—calor (grande).
Chuhéj, chuiéj—hoyo, agujero, pozo—lo mismo hoya de muerto.
Chuiéj—pozo ó agujero.

D

t-Dhén—duro. Ver: porque es duro, etc.
t-De-hóte hnat?—¿qué tiempo hace?
at-Dej lenécque helé?—¿quién dibujó esta yica?
no-Déj toj-oténi—como siempre á esta hora (mirando al cielo).
Dnoca tente—bolas.
t-Dock—cuero, piel.
t-Dój—ucle, la cáscara.
Dtán-tan—trigo (quíchua)
Dtel che?—¿de dónde?
Dtó-tój hope?—¿cuál (de cuál)?
ayoje Dtoj, dhoj—cuero de tigre.
t-Dut-lé-cuéj—corazoncito, pulso.

E

i-áj-l-Ec—párese *(iaj*—no; *l*—partícula relativa de tercera; *éc*—de verbo ir.
Eck, ecke—con. Ver Cué y subfijo adjetivante.
not-Ecji—vamos á comer.
Eckia—hasta.
Ec-lin—nada tú. Ver Tlin.
nojl-Ecque—barba (parte de cara).
l-Ectzá—hija.
Eeh-amajtecná?—bien y vos?
E'eh nigüen—los he visto (á los Tobas).
E'hg, ó, hiéh, a-his jlin—sí, bueno de salud.
E'hije, ó é? ¿adónde? Ver estar.
Ehóm—mas.
Gran: Ehomta c-hajai hote 'hidé (no como) Mulato—Granadero es más valiente que Mulato. (Literalmente; Granadero es más valiente, igual no es mulato).
Eiló, quiot inot—cuidado, te vas á caer en el agua.
Einjló—quita, allá para dar paso (á un lado!)
Ej—forma de **cue, écque** etc. con.
not, Ej—comer.
not, Eje—lavar ropa.
not, Ej jlá, notáj jlá—comer piojos.
nil, Ecquie—lavar.
l-Ejquie nutéi—lavarse los ojos y todo, Ver: ojos, cara.
El—otro.
yájà-El?—¿paisano tuyo es aquel?
heeh nu-El—paisano si es mio.
nu-El-lido, hunát-él jlelé paisano no es, es de otra nación ó tierra.
Elàj tojnequioíje luna nueva, empiezan las empresas. No tienen *luna llena.*
Elá notpiléi huelá—quizá yo pueda volver dentro de un mes.
Elát—talvez.
Elé—loro (ave).
Elé matycque—el loro voló.
Elé'huiyó—el loro se ha volado. Un Indio cazando me dijo *y'cque* por *huíyó.*
Elmó'ji-hila tojanatxi?—¿dónde vas á dormir esta noche?
Elmó'ji tojnatxi?—¿dónde dormiste anoche? Ver: ni-mojil.
Eloguŏye—¿qué dices?
En—prefijo de plural, Ver: Frases Avanzar.
nojl-Enécque—dibujar.
atdejl-Enécque hele?—¿quién dibujó esta yica?
nojl-Enécque—yo la hice (dibujé).
Enimó'ji?—¿dónde voy á dormir? *j* nasal; *e* donde; *ni* prefijo de 1ª persona.
En-jlin (yelatáj)—ensilla (el caballo).
Equie tója—póntela (de ropa). Ver: toma el sombrero, espérate.
Esicuagde—pequeño, chiquito: de **e-tzi-cuaj-tde** (tema diminutivo y negativo).
lol-Ess (?)-noléss—sémen de hombre.
noj-l-Ess—familia (mi).
nol-Ess lacticuaiél—tres hijos.
n-Essé—concha (vulva). Mocoví Ncassaák.
n-Essé lossáj—concha chica.
n-Essé ŭéŭ—concha grande.
Estenúc-cue, ic-quiótquie—quebracho colorado.

nujl-Etéj—frente del hombre. V. Cabeza. Tob. Latap.
E-tec-pbút—pañuelo de taparse.
nojal-Ethа *(th* casi inglesa*)*—acordarse de un muerto.
Et-squiin—zapallo.
Et-tec-taj—macana.
Et-tec-táj-huu (huó)—macanero.
Ettój lemèn? ¿cuál te gusta más? talvez ¿te gusta esto? Ver: al-Hemén. 2ª persona.
l-Etsá—jóven.
Etse—chupar algarroba. *(œtzoe).*
l-Etseg c-lô *vel* **c-lu**—bala de fusil—**ô**=**ôu**—Ver: Semilla, munición.
l-Etseg- F. noletséj—arco.
l-Etseg-clô letseg—munición. Ver: fusil, chico, bala. ô=ôu.
l-Etseg-hi—armero *(el que las tiene).*
l-Etseg-huu—armero, *(el que las hace).*
l-Etseg-taj—cuerda del arco. *(taj* talvez *tdoj* cuero, de que se compone la cuerda.
l-Etsej—arco.
l-Etseni—chañar. Ver: Recoger.
hozetá t-Eùj uyés—el viborón ha comido un conejo.
Eyje, ó, E—donde. Ver: dormir, estar, *tdené.*
¿Eyje hauet?—¿dónde está la ranchería? Ver: donde.
¿Eyje tsitocue, vel, tchitocue?—¿dónde están las charatas? *j* nasal.
Eyje tojoitáj?—duele, ¿dónde te duele?
Eyje Uanclói?—¿dónde están los Tobas?

G

hal-Góy toi-ni-gûoy-«¿ Querés dormir conmigo?»
ní-Guaiecque—bombero.
ni-Gûecnú—doy. Ver: Tener, Dar. Toba, Sasouén.
nu-Guécqu—amigo.
no-Gûéi—poncho.
no-Gûéi, nohuei jlotzá—poncho.
no-Gûéi, jlotza—chico.
Gûeicasse—chasque.
no-Gûejcue—patrón.
nu-Gûejéi—amigos.
ni-Gûèn—tengo *(contesta). ni=no =nu.*
éeh ni-Gûèn—los he visto.
namu-Gûèn—yo no los veo.
alo-Gûèn, nu-huen—*(veo).*
alo-Gûèn hohúó let-quiél?—¿tienes hambre de gallina?
ni-Gûén hoténi—tengo diez, juntando las dos manos.
am M° Gûèn huasetáj?—¿tiene vacas Mulato?
nu-Gûèn iquiáje—yo lo quemé (al campo).
Gûenité, gûenidé—no hay.
M°-Gûentixichecuas ntóque—Mulato tuvo mnchas mujeres.
iectoj ni-Gûen Uancloi—estoy mirando á los Tobas.
nojlam ni-Gûen Uancloi—yo he visto á los Tobas.
alo-Gûen Uancloi?—¿has visto á los Tobas?
no-Gûethe ó nohuéte—ranchería, rancho.
Gûíth—también, y.
no-Gûi'tugûi—primo.
no-Gû'itxi-déh toj ajlú, (ajló)—campo cuyo fin no se alcanza á ver.
Gunachúgû'e—medio día.
ni-Guoí nimojil am—quiero dormir.
Guu—Ver, **Huu.**
Guucn'a—sombrero.
Guucquiàla (huu?)—dibuja.
na-a-Guuéhéi— amigos; Ver, **nu-Guejéi.**
na-a-Guuéjgù— amigo; Ver, **Nuguécqù.**
Guuitxa-'hót—pájaro puntupí.
Guunnà—sombrero.
Guún - nàcuaj ó **Guúnna lossáj**—sombrerito.
ca-Guun lossaj—rueda.
Guú-na-táj—sombrerón.

H

Ha ó **Há**—prefijo de 2ª persona.
Hac-lej—anzuelo.
Hac-ló-huulé—yuyo, Ver; yerba y hoja y palo.
Hachéte—naranja.
Hahí-ddéh—no vale; *dd* apirada.
Hahí ddéh quiinácque — vale no (sirve) este cúchillo; Ver, **hanej.**
Háis tojluo tsecua?—¿te gusta pitar? Ver, **Hnutse-cua** y **ha-Is** etc.
nu-Háj—bóveda del paladar.
nuc-Haj—bóveda del paladar; Ver, boca.
Hal—prefijo de 2ª persona muy

usado en los interrogativos; P.
Halanej—¿sabes, comprendes?
Halgóy tojniguòy?—¿quieres dormir conmigo?
Halinàh—harina.
Hal nej noya—¿quieres venir conmigo?
Haló—árbol, T.
Halòăj, halaj—surubí, pez; T.
Ha-ló-cuuaj—arbolcito.
Ha-lo quiú—tronco (pierna de árbol)
Halotaje, hajlutáj — campo muy grande; Pampa. Ver **Ajlú**.
Halotage—yacaré; Ver palo.
Haluén latataj htój? thój—¿tienes cuero de lobo? *t* aspirada.
Hamana, lonolotaj—nútria.
Hamato tojlohemenno?—¿es cierto me querrás siempre? *no*, pronombre 1ª.
nu-Hamóu—mal.
Hanej — saber, tener costumbre; Ver, **Halanej** y **noi-Hanej**.
noi-Hanej—sé, comprendo.
Hassé-huu—alcahuete.
Hatdezu—Ver, **Atde-tzú**.
Hathes—aloja: *th* casi inglesa.
no-Hatilocmŏ—tengo sueño.
no-Hatilomo—sueño (tengo).
Hatoeuj—iguana.
Haloi—madera.
Hauéte—casa.
Hayagüé—médico de indios.
Hcah ó **jka**—no.
Hclocque hin'—plato de comida.
Heeh nu él—sí, mi paisano.
Heéque, hiéc—sí.
Heti hepa achecua hepa?—¿dónde está tu mujer?
Heiquiete—viejo.
Helé—yica, bolsa de red de varios tamaños.
al-Hemén—te gusta, gustas.
naiHemén am—te quiero mucho á tí: **n'a i**—yo mucho te...
nam-Hemen am—no te quiero.
nai-Hemén—te quiero mucho. Ver, Te quiero, tú me gustas.
al-Hemén huasetaj iú?—¿te gusta la carne asada?
aj-Hemén no—gustas (tu me); Ver querer, ser.
al-Hemen noye? (noyec?)—te gusto? (gustas tú de mí?)
aj-Hemén no — te quiero, tú me gustas.
al - Hemen nuia? — ¿me quieres? (amar).
Hen—subfijo de plural; Ver, retar; Frases.
Henno ha-lo-loj monquiege — él quiere comer—ojo *loj* ó *locque*, comida.
Hennó halolój nonquieie—él quiere comer.
Hén quié—toca.
Hepp—rancho; T.
Hepp-cate-tsaj—humo del vapor.
Hepp-jlip—cuarto, rincón, esquina.
Hép-péi—ranchería.
Hepp-la-huos—marinero, barquero, de *hepp*—barco, casa.
Hepp-losa—chico vapor.
nu-He-quiój—pantalla.
Hep quio—adentro del rancho.
He-zaj—carancho.
Hézáj-lé-quiél—huevos de carancho.
ni-Hiát—dueño.
Hichatúh—cuervo.
noj-Hieji-am-cuie— yo quiero venir contigo, vengo contigo.
noj-Hiemen am—te quiero por acto de voluntad.
P. loitaj hue-Hien clin nŏ—P. quiere hacerme mal; Ver, Hacer—**no-iemjlin-'Hije**—está.
Hiiéj-hu—bastantes; Ver, muchos.
aquinasetáj Hije?—¿hay vacas (en la toldería)?; Ver, **Ijejito**.
Hin-né-mid—nunca; Ver, **Ic-ne-mid** Véase **inem** en respirar y latir.
ni-Hioc—calabrote.
Hipbal-la apé-él—tirante encima del otro.
hlamto- Hips—él se ha quemado, *ph p* soplada.
His ó **is**—bueno de forma.
His—mucho, lindo (contesta).
a-His; a-is—tu muy buena (eres).
a-His; ais; ais—tu eres muy donosa.
nu-His hlin—tengo gusto T.
a-His, hom his—bueno muy.
Hiséj—también, y **(his-ej)**.
no-Hiú—pañuelo (de cabeza).
no-Hiúcuáj jlá-úcuaj—morder piojos.
Hlacanat—Ver: **hla-Canat**.
Hlacuass—los piojos. Ver: **Jlá-***cuass* diminutivo plural.
Hlam—hacer aguas mayores.
Hlam jlam tohiph—el se ha quemado, *ph—p* soplada.
Hláni. Ver: **C-lani**.
Hlapé—puerta.

Hlá-pût—laguna.
Hlép—nido.
Hlip—mitad, pedazo.
Hlip-pe—un poco.
Hoip-pehiass—cuarta parte.
noj-Hlócahi, nohclóca-hin — (pronombre difícil)—mi plato de comida.
noj-Hloc ti—beber, mi vaso de. Ver: **Hlót**.
H-lope-tsí—ramas—*hlo-lo* árbol; *pe* arriba; *tsi* locativo.
Hlót—para.
Hocliziej—resina de palo santo. Ver: Palo santo.
Hoc-loj, hoj-lój—palo santo.
Hoc-cui-natáj—paloma.
Hocuinathe—paloma.
Hoêpy hopp — simbol (paja), neblina, vapor, así parece.
Hoiáj, hoyáj—mistol.
nojlam-Hoitaj noithechi —· yo quiero comer.
Hôláj—papa ó raiz parecida á mandioca; la comen hervida ó asada.
Holotáj—playa grande.
Holotáj lostój—playa chica.
Hom ó ehom—más. Ver: comparativos.
óón-Hón—grita, clama.
Hon-ckié—conversar.
Hon-j-lin—gritar. Ver: Hacer.
Honólotáj thoj lojsaj—cuero chico de nutria.
a-Hót—Dios, Diablo, etc. (*¿a* superlativo de *hót?)* Ver: *hót.*
Hót—para. Ver: agua, esta es para tí; *óht.*
Hót—muerto. Ver: Sombra.
na-Hót ó nahõet—podrido.
Hóte—también.
Hotéjoasi, P. Notejoasi—dos (2).
Hoté joasi, lacti cuáyel—veces, 2, 3, etc.
Hotelé—corazón.
Hoténi—diez. juntando las dos manos paradas y abiertas con los dedos arrimados; (como-son ó hay).
Uancloi Hoténi huitsáj—los Tobas fueron siempre malos.
Hoteya—como, P. como, J.
Hotlé—corazón.
Hotnan-nei ahloi—acarrear leña.
Hotoláys—cementerio.
Hót peiacque—sombra del muerto.
Hótsáj inqunáj nõel—una víbora lo mordió.
Hótsáj lucáj lucaque—picadura de víbora.
Hotsetag tehúen huentiei—comen (los víborones comen los pájaros).
no-Houete—cama.
Hóuó ntócque—muchas gallinas.
Hosetá teûj uyés—comido, el viborón ha comido un conejo.
la-Huac—llama de fuego.
nu-Huac-lá—sobrino.
Huachâne—verde.
Huahát—pez en general,
Huai—algarroba.
Huaichomblé—olvidar. Ver: Mentira.
no-Huaintsaj—cobarde.
Huaintsajj—miedolento.
Hua'ji—temblor, ó se mueve.
Huaji—Ver: laja Quiega.
Huajnocua—bagre, (pez).
Huajnóla—bagre (pez).
no-Hualá—primo.
Huala (catziha)—tiempo (malo).
Huala catzija—tiempo malo.
Huala hotéji—un día, parando un dedo; *j* nasal.
quiéjote Huálá moiom haueté?—¿cuántos días faltan á la ranchería (para llegar).
Huála, ijuála—dia, sol.
Huala népho—el sol se levanta.
Huála yopil quiloéuej—ponerse, el sol se pone.
lo-Hualanaj—pala de tejer.
Hualaniss—prima.
Hualaúcj. Kualaûcj—tasi.
Hualc-lój—P. Torobí?—avestruz.
Huale, hualej—*copulam habere*—acto sexual.
Huá-lictsí—aloja de algarroba. Ver: «resina de palo santo».
Hualis sije lacticuaiel, locató—cinco.
Hualiss *sije ó ije*—cuatro; *j* nasal.
Huancloj—constelación cerca de la cruz del Sur.
Huanjlój—constelación cerca del crucero del Sur. Ver: Avestruz.
nu-Huapú—brazo, (parte superior).
Huasetag—vacuno (animal).
Huasetáj iú—carne asada.
Huasetaj tsinoló—esta vaca es mia.
Huaséteje—vaca.
Huassetáss—bueyes.
Huatnuclá—bagre (pez).

Huatsáje—víbora. Ver: **Chasquietáje.**
nu-Huayé-nécque—yerno.
u-Huc—resina de otra clase. Ver: Palo Santo.
Huc-ló—palo santo.
Hucuáj, yuquné—morder. Ver: picar.
Hu-cuni-i (e) hepp—entra.
to-Huec—ollita de barro.
Huecni—ve ahí.
ni-Hûé-gûiichecuas tacticuaiél—hue-vito tiene tres mujeres.
Huehié—fragua.
P. loitaj Huehien nô—P. quiere hacerme mal.
ni-Huéhu ilonem Uancloi jojonné—correr, Huevito avanzó á los Tobas y los corrió.
ni-Huéhu ilonem Uancloi jojonné—avanzar; Huevito avanzó á los Tobas y los corrió. (Arriba de *ilonem* está *inéya*, y de *jojonné taj*, en lapiz).
nu-Huéje—anular, dedo; común al índice y al medio del pié. Ver: **nu-Huess.**
nu-Huéje—medio (dedo mediano), como el *anular* y el *índice*, se dice con el acto. Ver: **nu-Huess.**
Huéj-hu—bastantes.
Huejla—pon otro.
nu-Huéjlosé—chico (dedo). Ver dedo pulgar.
nu-Huej-quia-lu—asentadera.
Hueláj—lámpara. Ver Luna.
Hueláj iéi, ó, yopil quielouéj—la luna se pone.
Hueláj nequienm—la luna se levanta.
Huél nu-ho—avísame.
Huelec—mortero.
Huelec-quiá—mano de mortero.
te-Huen—comen.
Huenchomli—mentira, no. Ver Olvidar.
Huéné—Ver, veo.
hal-Huené comandante?—visto ¿lo has visto al comandante?
Huenidé—pobre, no tiene; negativo.
Huemquié'hi—jaula de pájaros.
Huentié—ave, y **Ahuen-tié.**
Huentiei—pájaros en general. Ver: **Cuentiei.**
Huen-tiei-hi—jaula.
Huén-tiein-quia—pl, huentiéi lacquiál—cazador, cazadores.
Huesáj—frazada. Ver Chiripá.
Huesaj jlip—frazada, punta de la, Ver Pedazo.
Huesaj—tejido.
nu-Hue-sécque—alma.
nu-hue-séi—almas.
Huesetáj—hilo rojizo.
nu-Hués lucué, *é*, abierta—pulgar de pie ó mano.
Huesój—chiripá. Ver frazada.
nu-Huess—dedos.
nu-Huet—rancho.
Uancloi aitaj (Huetaj), inehia (ilonen), Nihuehùù—los Tobas van á avanzar á Huevito.
no-Hueté—casa (mi).
no-Huéte—rancho.
en Huét, nohén, nodtojl?—lanza (la punta)—*nodtoj* es el palo, fierro de que se hacen; *hen* ó *en*, lanza ó punta.
Huetsáj iuquáj noél hu—*noel*—á aquel—una víbora mordió, ó picó, al Indio.
Huh-nai—pocote (una pasiflora).
ya-Huho inót—no te eches al agua.
ya-Hûi; yiicté, ia-húc—se ha ido, se fué.
Hui-ái huolei—hoja de la planta de plata.
Hui-ai—planta de plata. Ver Chaguar—*hui* sería genérico. Ver Tabaco.
Hui-ái jlilé—gajo del *huiái*. Ver planta de plata, Chaguar.
n-Hú-iaquié, nhí—voy á venir, espérate.
Huidóc—sobrina.
Hûié—chaguar, planta testil cactácea; tiene flor grande blanca y piña como ananá silvestre.
Huieláj, laj, loj, locque—enredadera que comen hervida y asada.
Huiélás jlahuís—hoja de *huielás*, especie de chaguar con flor amarilla sin fruta ni hebra.
ia-Huien, iahullen—conversar, están conversando. Ver Lengua-iaz.
Huiétás—cháguar con flor colorada no testil.
Huiétás jlajuó—flor de cháguar. Ver Flor.
Huiétás tzejlolis—espina de punta del cháguar, F.
Huiéte (?) tequioji—hace frío.
Huiis—sangre.
Huijmi—apagar. Ver quemado—*iii*.

ta-Huille—está conversando.
ta-Huilleg él—está conversando con otro, ojo á la q—con.
Huitd—con, y, conjunción. T.
Huitni—Chiriguano.
Huitó—trabajar.
no-Huitóe—sobrino. Ver primo, prima.
Huitojcui—amiga (mujer?)
Huitonáj—tuco (luciérnaga), Corrientes, Tucá.
Huitsóc—chimenea.
Huitsoná—chilca (yuyo con cuyo polvo prenden fuego encendido al molerlo con otro palito apuntado de otra madera).
iutaj Hui yojli—está por volar.
Huixotá—golondrina.
Hú-lo-lá—fruta.
Humena—pasto.
Huméne—carpincho.
Hu-naj—es ya tarde.
Hunajj—lento, tardío.
Haj-quíu-náj—media noche, T. Ver Dedo medio.
Hunati (?), hunát—tierra.
Húnatxi—noche.
Hunná—noche (esta).
kia-Hunná—noche (esta).
Hunnat-chiú-ueck—media noche.
Hunná-txi-nna—anoche.
Huochecua (?) achoj—tráigame fuego.
Huoclá—primo.
Huòc-yéc-táj—pato de Castilla.
ni-Huoèc—palometa (pez), era el dueño del pez.
Huog hueya—tápate.
Huohuó—mudo.
Huoi—distante.
Huoiáh ó huoóiaj—pato. Ver Chalana y hacer.
nu-Huól—hombro de hombre.
nu-Huolé—cabello, pelo de hombre.
Huolei—follaje. Ver Vellón.
Huoléi—hoja en general parece. Ver Cabellos.
lo-Huoléi, lahuuis—plumas, eran de un chimango.
Huolei—vellón.
ho-Huó let-quiél—huevos de gallina.
Huolópe—hormiguero.
Huosachitáj—cardenal (pájaro).
Huó-saquiit—cardenal (copete rojo).
la-Huot—flor—h parecida á g.
Huotséta—serpiente. Ver Víbora.
Huotsojquié—remedio contra la víbora.
Huotsotaj-ess—mate partido de tomar agua.
Huo-yé (subfijo)—delante de.
Husán—hacha (castellano).
a-Hutáj hopp—cortar (pasto).
Hutána-huu—redero (el que las hace).
Hutanáj—red de 3 ó 4 varas.
Huu—hacer en varios sentidos, subfijado al objeto.
Huucná quuétsej—sombrero de paja.
no-Huuécque—patrón,decente,amigo.
Huuéjhu—demasiado es, enteramente.
Huuejhu—mucho (es).
Huuídh—también, y.
Huuj (Huuij (?) niyiát toj-canniát—el nombre propio de Mulato. T.; lit.: *Huuíj*, señor, el Cacique.
Huuo ouo hu-tí—gallina.
n-Hú uojcoi—voy á pescar. Ver pesca.
Hú-u toc-léi—gallos (riña de).
Huutsé-cua—pitar (imperativo).
ya-Hú-yéi—se va.
Hu-yiai-cquié-cuihepp—entren.
Huys—menstruo y sangre en general.

I

I—letra á veces infijo eufónico, como *en-mat-ti-tdé*, falso; otras veces prefijo, que se pierde en combinación, como *i-huelaj* (luna) que pasa á ser *huelaj* en las frases.
Iágugo, iá'hu'ho, inot—no te eches al agua; *g* ó *h* nasal; fijarse en la forma negativa *ta (jaj)* que parece propia de la segunda persona.
Iahuho inót—no te eches al agua.
Iaj, y láj—no (prefijo). Ver: **Iájmohi inot**—no te eches al agua—Cuidado.
Iajcael—ande (?)
Ijáin phó—despiértate (!)
Iajléc—párese (no vaya). Ver Volar.
Iajloconquié—beba despacio (F «No se trague todo»).
Iajmo'hi inot—no te eches al agua: Cuidado; *h* nasal.

Iajtxoi a-tappé inot—no te eches agua.
Iaj-cjaelit—no se trague todo. Ver: **Caelitt**—ligero.
Iapiná, yapiná—sancudo: y—j toscana.
Iaquiep—verano.
Iaquqa inot—no te eches al agua.
Icke—con.
Ickió—bajo.
Ickiom-le-léi (icquiomleléi)—abajeños.
Icnamil—nosotros (?) y vosotros (?)
Icnemid—nunca.
Ic-ne-mid—nunca.
Icnú, ycnó—hombre.
Icnuquaj—hombrecito, pl. *inucláss*.
Icnú toj lolique o lolije—hombre hecho, mozo desarrollado; pl. *icnul*; T.
Icnú lucué-taj—hombre grande.
no-Icque—me voy.—**Nojlitacque noicque**—(lugar distante)—iré pronto á Buenos Aires.
Icquie—Tiempo de (alguna fruta).
Icquia'láj—violeta oscuro.
Icquiott—Ver: **Iquiot**—colorado; T.
Icuá—hinchado.
Icuála chiicuála—mañana.
Icuála elláke—anteayer.
Icuála ikni—medio día.
Icualainlo—cerca del día.
Icuálanná—hoy.
Icuálannáke—ayer.
Icuála, quiicuála, icualá—mañana *cras*.
Icuala ú *vel* **hú**—lucero de la mañana.
Ichontoje—cuero de algo. Ver: **htój, thój, hój**, *t.* aspirada.
Iectojnigüen Uancloí—estoy mirando á los Tobas; Ver: mirar.
Iél-l—enfermo, Ver: Lastimado.
tsitocué Iél-l—herida, una paloma está herida ó muerta.
Mulato Iél-l—Mulato está enfermo.
Uancloi Iél-l—los Tobas están enfermos.
nojlam no Iél-l—estoy yo enfermo.
nojlamil Iél-l—nosotros estamos enfermos.
no-Iél-l—herido, Ver: enfermo, lastimado, muerto, cansado.
no-Iemjlin—hacer, yo hacer.
no-Ié-nén—cansados estamos.
Iéquié—camisa.
Iequic, nojlam laja nuca iequie nopela-guó—estoy sin camisa (blanca).
Tácquii Iés tsilatá—los Indios son buenos.
Igüelajj—mes ó luna.
Iguuiss—vieja (pescado).
Iguás—gusanos.
Iguumquió—llueve.
nu-I-haniiègde—Ver: Hanej.
Ihuála nají—ayer.
Iiapil—pasear.
Iiocantisa—cazar, vamos á—.
Iielatajo, yelataj—caballo.
Iielemé—ciervo.
Iiél-l—muerto, F; **tilocnó, locná, hot**.
Iiél-l—muere.
no Iiel—cansado yo.
Iiel-léj—pala, como doble remo por barreta.
Iiénjlin huó-oiaj—estoy haciendo una chalana, Ver: pato, de cuya forma viene el nombre á la chalana.
Iié-t—retar, reconvenir. Ver: frases.
Iietá—reto.
at lòi-'íje?—¿vas solo? ¿estás solo?
Iil—morir.
ntoc a-Iioje—bastantes tigres.
laja a-Iioje—no hay tigres.
Iiotaj—gordo. Ver: **Iotaj**.
Iit-tit-táj—azul.
l-Ij anicquiil—limpiar mocos. Ver: **nil-Ejquie**.
Ije—tener, estar, ser. Ver: **éhc no-Checua ije**.
é-I'je?—¿adónde están? *j* nasal casi *h*—**ueleitxi**—allá.
é-Ije hauet?—¿adónde esta la ranchería? Ver: Donde.
Ije tojahué—aquí están.
Uancloi Ije tojleitxi?—¿están allí los Tobas?
tsitocue Ije tojtxi hotecoasí tacasite—aquí hay dos palomas paradas.
é-Ije Uancloi?—¿dónde están los Tobas?
é-I'je tsitocue, *vel*, **tchitocué?**—¿dónde están las charatas? *j* nasal.
tsitocue Ijejite (te-dh?)—no hay palomas. Ver: Hije.
Ijuála hú—estrella de oriente de la noche.
Ilatatáj—lobo de agua.
Iloi—vivo (que sirve).

no-Ilójo—curar, Ver: vivo. Los Indios están curando al enfermo **Uicquiei ilojéjo tojiil-nán.**
Uancloi Ilón Mulato—los Tobas mataron á Wilken, N. B. Toda vez que pregunté á Faustino frases en que los Tobas eran los matadores de cristianos, él buscaba evitar la réplica directa y así á Wilken, lo substituyó con Mulato.
adéj toj-Ilon?—¿quién le ha matado?
nojlam toj-Ilon—yo le he matado.
Uancloi Ilònen cigüéle—los Tobas mataron á los cristanos.
Uarbos Ilón icnú—Barbosa mató á un Indio.
Mul° Ilón icnú-vel, icnó—Mulato mató á un hombre.
na-Ilónjlá, naílonlá—te voy á matar.
na-Ilonlá—te voy á matar.
Imaíc-cua—alguna cosa.
Inaguup—Agosto (tiempo en que brotan las flores), Ver: primavera.
Inat—nosotros (nos).
Inatajj—pronto, es temprano, T.
Inem—no . . . más, yá . . . no
Inhuóc—viento, que hace viento.
I-nhiót—tierra, greda para ollas.
Iniato—ñato. Voz Castellana. Creen que las mujeres y también los hombres se hacen ñatos si comen carne de oveja, especialmente cuando están embarazadas.
na-In-ló—hambriento.
na-In-ló-ló-néc—hambriento.
na-In-lo-nejj—hambre tiene este.
Inot coj—limpia el agua, limpia Aquí *coj* es «traducción literal de la palabra castellana «rica» por buena.
honein Inót niiat isiquieiitoj—lleve agua y fuego (al patron).
Inote, inoti—agua—*e* ó *i* casi muda: véase vaso de beber—tí.
Iñój—compañero.
Inotlatxi hót ám—agua, esta agua es para tí.
Iocmen—derrota, Ver: «vencer» en la forma *iucós*, que parece tenga la misma raiz.
n-Ionlá—voy á beber.
ni-Iot ó niioti-(ii—jtos:)—beber **I-ió vel I-hió,** T.
Ioyéj, iioyéj—beba, Ver: quiere tomar?
Ioyéj quaiojláj—beba poco—**locquiol locuáj.**
toh-Iph—se ha quemado, Ver: **Hlam tohiph ó Itója iphu.**
Ip-lá-jquié—otra vez.
Ipotó—hábito de cuero. (Palabra Toba).
nojlamá ó nojlam Ipòùh—nosotros nos hemos quemado.
itója Iphu—el fuego arde, Ver: **Itój hai pûh ó bpuh?** ¿te has quemado?
Iquieláj—hilo negro, Ver: Negro.
Iquióte—rojo.
Iququo, nojlam paji deh noiququo. . . .—iré pronto á. . . .
Irlój—cortadera, paja que corta.
a-Is—tú eres muy donosa.
nojlam no Is—yo soy bueno. Ver: **is**—bueno.
Uicquií ya Is—los Indios son buenos.
nojlamil no Is—nosotros somos buenos.
Iscat—robar. Tob. Sucatiá.
Uuancloi Iscat hépp—los Tobas robaron al vapor.
Uancloi Iscat Yucquii—el Toba roba á los Matacos.
Isiquiéi—I.
Isnáje—oso macho.
nhu Isquisiej—reir.
nu-Iss—sano estoy
Iss c-lin?—¿sano estás?
nu-Isset, niset—corto (verbo).
Is-sét—cortad.
Istén aloi nau-la-háya—cortad leña, te voy á pagar. Ver: Valer.
Istenij, steny—quebracho blanco.
há-Is tojluo-tsecua?—¿te gusta pitar? Hais, etc.; segunda persona por *ha*.
Itítaj nocoseté tiniec—calzoncillos (eran de tela azul). Ver: Chiripá.
Itit-táj—azul oscuro (casi).
Itój—fuego, luz.
achoj Itoj—deme fuego.
Itój-hi—yesquero, porta-mecha.
Itója iphu—el fuego arde. Ver: **Itoj hai pûh ó bpuh?**—¿te has quemado?
Itój hai pûh ó bpuh, u—où—¿te has quemado? Ver: **Itoja iphu.**
Itój itúhilá hopp—el fuego quemará el pasto.
Itoj-quiá—eslabón (lit: instrumento para fuego).
Itoj'i-huas—las cajitas de fósforos:

(*i* nasal en lugar de '*hi*).
Itój leitni—allá hay una luz.
Itój-léss—mecha del «fuego».
Itój lu—pedernal.
Itój mucq—ceniza (lo molido del fuego).
Itoj-ni—yesquero.
Itoj telsáj ueleitni—allá hay humo de fuego.
Itós-sass—fueguitos, fósforos.
Itzájquié quiitzaj hú—ancho; ojo *hu* subfijo en lugar de *i* prefijo, *tzaj* adjetivante; *quii* y *quié* raíz. Nótese la inversión.
Itzonój—sunchal (ó yuyo parecido).
Itzonú—puñalear (ha puñaleado).
Iú—asado, quemado, maduro; *tobuccue* — asado, probablemente cocinado.
no-Iú—me he quemado.
nojlam to-Iú—yo me he quemado.
Iuc-cu-uá—pica.
Iúc-lép—relámpago.
Hinescós Iucós Uancloi—Mulato venció á los Tobas. Ver: derrota.
Uancloi Iucós nan—los Tobas nos vencieron.
nojlam no-Iucús Uancloi—yo vencí á los Tobas.
nojlam Iucús Uancloi — nosotros vencimos á los Tobas.
Iuéjla—falta me hace.
Iúhuis—vieja (pez).
Iukuác—picar.
yapiná Iukuacnú—el mosquito me pica.
yapiná Iuknác noj quinacquié—los mosquitos me picaron mucho anoche.
Iutáj hui-yojli—está por volar.
atclo-Iya Pepe, atloya P.—¿con quién vino Pepe?

J

la-Já—no. Ver: **Laja**. Tob. *Sa*-no.
la-Ja—sin. Ver: Frases.
la-Ja checnáya—viuda.
no-Jáujloj—huso.
Jaséte—párate. Ver: Descansar y hay paradas.
ua-Jat-tlin-nu—despiértate.
ya-Jin phó—despiértate, (no duermas).
Jká—no.
Jlái—frutita de la flor del cháguar. Ver: Semilla, bala.
Jlá, jlacu-ass, jlá-lu-cuétaj—piojo, piojitos, piojón.
nejquiaéc Jlajúó—flor nueva del cháguar.
Jlam, hlám—Cg. (aguas mayores).
Jlám-meje—lo mismo, así no más, siempre (final *ej*—con).
Jlá sinalú—piojo, comer, morder.
at-Jléi caniat?—¿cómo se llama el cacique?
at-Jléi niiat?—cómo se llama el dueño? (era de un caballo).
J-lémquii-taj—madrejón (de río). Ver: ancho.
at-Jléni?—¿qué haces?
J-lép—refusilo.
Jléque amló- apurar, le apura el dolor, se aflije por eso. Ver: dolor; no me apuro—**nam-quel**—á la observación. Trabajen muchachos. Ver: lijero.
Jléque amlé—dolor, lo ha apurado.
Jlé-tecquuí—techo ó corona de casa.
nu-Jletéj, jlétéc—cabeza de bruto.
Jleuémec—flor vieja del cháguar.
nu-Jlic-cu-i—enemigo.
nu-Jlic-cu-i-is—enemigos.
en Jlin—ensilla.
Jlin—hacer. Ver: **Honjlin**.
ien-Jlin huc-oiaj—estoy haciendo una chalana.
Jlip—pedazo, parte.
hepp-Jlip—cuarto, rincón.
Jlíp—punta.
Jlique amló—fatigado está, hablando de un picado por víbora que estaba con dolor. Ver: Dolor.
Jlo, vel, Lo—prefijo demostrativo de tercera y de cosa; y subfijo adjetivante muy en uso en los posesivos.
nu-Jló—P. noglú—o=u—miembro viril. Tob. Coué (L.)
J-hó-'hi—cartucho. Ver: lleve.
Jloié—O.
M. Jlouécque yelatáj—M. es el patrón del caballo; ojo, doble posición del genitivo
J-ló-yá—también.
ia-Jlucuá-jlá—no muerda piojos; *iaj* negativo.
iá-Jlucuá jlá tojnoiam—no muerda piojos delante de mí. Ver: **Hucuáj**.
Jlucuéita, huéhu—grande—**uéhú**.
Jlucuéita—poncho grande.
nu-Jlu-hue-léi—vello de las partes.
Jlui, jluiquiass, ucle—la semilla.

Jlup—año. Ver: invierno, probablemente se cita la estación,—época.
Jláp ejlaj—año (el pasado) la época pasada) pasado, no el año, que no distinguen parece.
Jlup ej-laj—pasado de *jlup*—época, estación; *ej=él*—otro; *laj=naj* adverbio remoto.
Jlup yib-él—el año aquel (pasado tiempo).
Joái, jocái—algarroba, Ver: *aiúc.*
to-Joitáj—te duele—*toj oitáj.*
ni-Joitoijtáj—cicuta, (yerba que se le parece).
Jojonnéj—vencer.
adhej toj-Jojonnéj?—¿quién venció?
T. Jojonnej am—T. te venció.
T. Jojonnej nojlam—T. me venció.
M. Jojonnéj Uancloi—derrotó Mulato á los Tobas.
no-Jotéji—solo (yo). *Jquidi, uenitde*—nada—nadie.
i-Juála—día, sol.
i-Juála hú—estrella de oriente de la noche.
i-Juála, huála—sol, día, poner levantar.

K

Kackiá—veneno (no remedio—*ckia*).
no-Kaieto, nojyequiél (?)—camisa y ropa.
Ka-matt, matti—dé (no cierto)—falso.
no-Kanniatí—Cacique.
Katchia, katchija—malo, feo, poco.
no-Katnate—cuchillo, Ver: *lequinaj.*
Katxia katxija, txitde—malo, feo, poco, (lit. no bueno).
noj-Kia—padre—*ckia.*
Kiahan—leña.
Kia-tquiái—nada.
Kié—con. Mocoví Q ó K.
notlo-Kié, nutlokie—pierna, (toda, muslo).
Kioti—suegro.
not-Kolói—pies.
no-Kosed—pantalones, Ver: Chiripá.
iu-Kuac—picar.
not-Kuay, nutcuequiú, nutcuejiú—mano.
no-Kulei, nohuuléi—cabellos (mis).

L

L—letra que á veces se confunde con la *n* por eufonia ú otras causas; Ver: *el-láje*, por, *el-náje*—pasado. Con frecuencia como infijo ó prefijo, en lugar de *lo, la* etc, expresa relación de tercera, persona ó cosa. También parece epentética en algunos interrogativos, especialmente de segunda. Ver: el *mõ'ji.*
La—prefijo que sostiene el tema absoluto, Ver: Puerta, caja, Flor Llama etc. Desempeña igual función que *lo*, á veces en la misma palabra. Ver: Pico, Panza.
Laccúno—todo.
Lactiss-jléuhj—ala, era de un chimango; *jleju-is*—plumas.
toj-Lahuiénecque—lenguaraz.
Lahuot—flor: **h**—casi *g.*
Lahuu—flor.
Láj—pref. nó.
Laja—no, Ver: Soltera, sin marido.
Pascual Laja quiecuá—Pascual quedó sin mujer.
Lajtaniáje, ó lajtaniniaje—campo muy grande.
La-ló—suyo (de él). Ver: Suyo.
noj-Lam hoitáj nothechi—quiero comer, estoy por comer.
Lanecji—concha.
Lani—ese.
Lapé—puerta.
Latatáj thoj—cuero de lobo.
Laticuaiél—tres, 3.
Latxáj—quiscaloro (opuntia.
Latxáj-lái—quiscaloro (la fruta).
La-txé, lo-txé—pancita.
nu-Lé (mi), la-let (su de él)—pintura de cara.
iaj-Léc—parese.
Lec-ckie-ios—cuñado. sobrino.
no-Léchéj—fusil. Ver: Arco, bala.
Lec-quii-táj—corazón.
Lecquiinaj 'hi—vaina de cuchillo.
Lecquiinat-thój—plata.
Lectxa—hija.
hate-Leitxinà leitxi?—¿cómo se llama aquella China?—Parece que, *lei, j-léi, p-léi* es el tema del verbo llamar.
atj-Léi caniat?—¿cómo se llama el Cacique?
toj-Leitxi ya tsilata (y=j toscana)—aquella es muy donosa.
ni-Lejquie—lavar.

Lejquie nutói—lavarse los ojos y todo, Ver: Ojos; aquí por cara.
noj-Lenécque—dibujar.
noj-Lenécque—yo la dibujé.
atdoj Lenécque hele?—¿quién dibujó esta yica?
nut-Lequié—pierna de hombre, Ver: Canilla.
Lep, j-lép—refusilo.
Léss—familia, atado, unión.
quiehotéa-Less?—¿cuántos hijos tienes tú?
noj-Léss—familia (mi).
no-Less laticúaiél—tres hijos.
no-Lét—pintarse.
nuj-Letéj—frente del hombre, T.
Letéc-tdoj—cabellera.
Letoi—tardar.
Letzá—joven.
Letzacuáj—muchacha virgen. (muchachita).
Letzeg—F. **noletzej**—arco.
Letzeg-clô letzág—munición, Ver: fusil, chico, bala, ô=u. Semilla.
Letzég-clô, *vel*, **clú**—bala de fusil; ô—ôû.
Letzeg-hi—armero (el que las tiene.)
Letzeg-huu—armero (el que las hace).
Letzeg-taj—cuerda del arco, (*taj* probabl. *tdoq*—cuero)
Letzej—arco.
Letzej mûque—pólvora:
Letzeni—chañar.
Licné—aquellos.
Lij anicquiil—limpiar mocos.
Litáj, litácq—pays: *noi'huph'o noj—litaj*—me voy á mi pais, (Buenos Aires). T. ó sea—*noj-litáque'noilcque*. Nótese la analogía del *li* con el *lé* patronímico: el *taj* es aumentativo, como conviene tratándose de Buenos Aires, á que se refiere Faustino.
Litze—aloja, T.
Lo—Ver j-lo, Muchas Veces pierde la *o* por eufonia ú otras causas. Es tambien prefijo en que se apoya el tema ábsoluto, es decir mas ó menos nuestro artículo. Ver La.
Locness—pico, Ver nariz.
Locné—lastimado, l. me ha.
yelatas Locné—el caballo me ha volteado.
Locsé—hijo.
noj-Loc ti—«mi plato de beber»—vaso, mi.
ni-Lodáma—Lenguaraz, Ver Conversar.
nit-Lodáma—« yo le entiendo á Vos» (Manuel, indio á bordo).
toc-Lohoqhuet—Almacen (Guarda viveres).
no-Lojnen—peleando.
Lójsaj, esicuglo—pequeño, chiquito.
Loless(?) noléss—sémen del hombre.
M. Lolessás triná ntocque—Mulato tiene muchas hijas.
M. Loles-senntoque—Mulato tiene muchos hijos.
Lo-mmo, lomó—dormid, Ver **lo Mmó**:
Lon—degollar.
nojlamil Lonen aiioj ntócqué—nosotros hemos matado muchos tigres.
nu-Loni—matar.
Uancloi oitaj Loni—los Tobas están por matar, Ver **Ilonlá**.
Loni, ilón—matar.
Ciguelé Lonlá Uancloi—los Cristianos mataron á los Tobas.
l-Lóp—invierno, Ver Año.
noj-Losé—hija (mi), Ver Hijo.
nor-Loss,nojloss—hijo (mi);—**loss**—hijo.
Los-rôe—vulva.
A-Lotójigûe—tuya. esa es tuya, 2ª persona.
Lotsé, locsé—hijo.
Lo-tzé—pancita.
Lotzi-cass—collar,
Loyá—vino con Pedro (contestación).
Loyajlin—estar con, compañero.
yelatác Lucái—freno, Ver Boca, picadura.
Luc-jáss—cogollo que da la flor.
Lucué—grande.
Luchéc-que—picadura.
Lupén—flaco (animal).
Lutéc—flecha.
Lutéc less—mazo de flechas.
Lutecq-huu—flechero.

M

nn-Ma hauét—cama (mi casa de dormir).
to-Ma ouet—catre (dormitorio).
Ma-co-taj—yeso.
Ma-co-taj muc—polvo de yeso.
Magué—zorro.
Magú—zorro.

Mamsé—jóven.
Mamsecnaj—muchacho jóven.
Mannioca—mandioca, ojo *n* por *d*.
Manihie hnét — almacen, tienda (guardaprendas).
Mat—cierto, contesta.
Mät—cierto.
Mätbpiye—cierto es.
Mät imaquiá—cierto es esto·
ha-Mato tojlo hèmen no?—¿cierto es, me querás siempre?
Mät ti-thé—falso es.
ka-Matt, matti-dé — (no cierto) falso.
elé Maticque—el loro volo.
Matsètój—sable(machete).
Mho—siga, I. Riv.
Miche—gato.
Miei—vaya á traer (de *mi*—ir y *iéi* vel *éi*—por).
Miei itój hlacanat itoj—traigame —«anda caminando lo llama porque traiga fuego».
Miia ó **Miiei**—Anda ó vete por....
lo-Mmó—dormir.
Mmóh—marcha.
ni-Mo—dormir, estoy por dormir.
la-Mó—dormir.
no-Mó—voy á dormir.
lo-Mo,atquiócpil quêlit lomó vel nomó—anda presto á dormir.
Atquiinoije nimó—aquellos van á dormir.
Mogéme, mohém—no comprendo (arriba con lapiz)—«andate no mas», dice á uno que queria vender.
Móhen - vayanse
atquiè-opil lo Mohén –vayanse á dormir.
Mo'hén opil—vayanse.
yaj-Mó'hl inot—no te eches agua —*h* nasal.
Mohué, mocué—andate, Ver **Cue**.
Moj—ir. Ver, voy á dormir contigo, **opil**.
oni-Mo'ji?—¿donde voy á dormir? *j* nasal.
el-Moji hilá tojanatxi? — ¿ dónde va á dormir esta noche?—forma fut., Ver Dormir.
el-Moji tojnatxi? — dónde dormiste anoche? *j* nasal.
ni-Mojiam, nojlam hoitáj nimojiam—yo quiero dormir contigo.
Mojlequuecque—entero, todo.
ni-Mojil—dormir, Ver aba,o.
Mój tsiiquie nitsohess—véte á poner lós zapatos.
Mol-taj—basta, no quiero, dejad.
Moltéji, molté—no quiero; **moltaj** I. R.
ni-Mo,nomó, numó—voy á dormir.
nu-Mo-onet, — mi catre (dormimitorio).
lo-Mötóq—polvo en general y así él del palo para hacer fuego—aserrin, afrecho. Ver Pólvora.
Muc — molido, deshecho, hebra, polvos.

N

Naguép—primavera. Ver: Agosto.
Nahéque—ayer. Ver: Volver.
Na-hée-loh-lo-néc—sediento.
Nahí (??)—adentro. Ver: la puse adentro.
Nahí—dentro. Ver: Adentro; **cku-l**.
Na-hót, Na-hõet—podrido.
yac-Nái—no te bañes.
na-Nai—bañarse.
no-Nái—lavarse.
na-Naién—bañarse.
Nái-'hniój—paisano, compatriota.
Na-in-ló—hambre.
Nain-ló-ló-néc—hambriento.
Na-in-lo-nejj—hambre tiene este.
tot-Náje nihuijché—avellanas (silvestres), semilla del cuidador del sapo: *j* nasal.
Najj-adverbio de tiempo algo remoto.
Naj, náji, naje—después, pasado.
Nam tojlécque—no te conozco.
Nañhie hnut — almacenero (que guarda prendas).
toj-Natxi, hunátximati—anoche.
noj-Nayej—*enfermo* de peste; *el-güelmo*, dijo un Indio.
Né-al-lu-'ho, Né alluho—corre tú; **né-qué al-lu'ho**—corran.
Necquié—recien.
Necquiayéc—fresco, nuevo.
Tsetáj Necué inot ndtoc—Roldán hizo muchos viajes.
Tsetáj Necuinot otejcui—Roldàn viajó una sola vez.
Nehene (?) locato—cinco, 5.
Néh-pho—subid.
hal-Nej—vienes.
la-Necji—concha.
Nelóm—melón.
Uancloi Nenani (nenanié)—avanzaron (los Tobas nos avanzan).
huala Nepho—el sol se levanta. Ver: Sentarse y subid.

Nè-qué al-lú'jo—corran.
Nequié—recien.
Néquiat—ahora.
Néquié—chuña.
huelaj Nequienm—la luna se levanta.
yelatáj Néss—nariz de caballo.
Nessé—concha (vulva).
Nessé lossáj—concha chica.
Nessé úéúù—concha grande.
nu-Né-té—herido.
Ndtócque—muchos.
cigúelentoj Ndtócque — muchos cristianos; ojo al *toj* es muy usado.
Nhu isquieiej—reir.
Ni-c-li-taj—pavo doméstico.
Nicquiejpho—repentinamente.
Nic-quiej pom-péj—siempre.
Nicuen-cai—prisioneros.
Nicuaœj-taj-pacú i. e—palometa grande.
Ni-'hioi—los chaguares.
Ni-ju-hil-lin—esperar.
Nihuoc nimoiec huahat—pesca grande; «vamos á pescar y dormir»; porque pasan la noche en la orilla y allí duermen.
Ni-huu-táj-i. e—mucho, soldado.
Niiocque—piola. Ver: Chaguar.
Nilodáma—lenguaráz.
Niñoih, niñhioi—hilo de cháguar. Ver: Liña y chaguar.
Niñoless—liña de cháguar.
Niopíl Tencuei—ir, nos vamos al Teuco. Ver: Opil.
Niquiet—cállate. T.
Niquioniát—lerdo.
Nisói—sal. T. **Nohigua**.
Nitijenaj—puse.
Nit-lódáma—«yo le entiendo á Vos». Indio Manuel.
Niyát—blancos, i. e. decentes.
Niyat—patrón, decente, amigo.
Niyat-tsa-*á* (*há*)—niño (decente, blanco).
No al-lu'ho—corre.
Noca-itój-less—cerda que sirve de yesca.
Noca-itojni—cuernito donde guardan la yesca de cerda.
Noc-lam—evacuar.
Nodtajén-jacarandá—palo, fierro, «barba de tigre», de hacer lanzas, etc.
lanecque Nóèc — cuchara. Ver: concha.
nu-cal-Nóèc—cuchara (mi).
cal-Nóèc—cuchara (tu).
Nogüe-hope—bastantes, muchos.
Nohiel-l—herido.
Noiemjlin—hacer, «yo hacer».
Noie-nén—casados estamos.
Noiiel—cansado, yo.
Noilóje—curar. Ver: Vivo.
Nojalétha—(*th* casi inglesa). Acordarse de un muerto.
Nojcléi—llamar, yo me llamo; de persona.
Noj-cué-chú—escribir, apuntar.
Nojlam, háote—yo. (**¿haote**—cómo tú?) Ver: Gramática.
Nojlamá, *vel*, **nojalam ipoùh**—nosotros nos hemos quemado.
Nojlamáh, nojlamil—nosotros.
Nojlam hoitáj nimojiam—yo quiero dormir contigo.
Noj-la-táj — puchero, «cualquier puchero de pescado».
Noj-lécque—barba (parte de la cara).
Nolét—pintarse.
Nolojnen—peleando.
Non-nom—vengo.
noj-Nom—vengo.
Nom, tojleitzi nequié nom—él viene.
Nom—venir.
Nom, tol-lei—viene.
Nontác-quedán (?)—gente poca. Ver: Bastante.
Noquó—todas.
Notecji—vamos á comer, Ver: Almuerzo.
Notej—comer.
Notej jlá, notúj jlá—comer piojos.
Notejoasi—ayer? Ver: Dos y llegar.
Nothél—mear. Ver: Oël.
Notiój—descargar el fusil.
ni-Nóti-osé—yo quiero á tu hija.
Notlin—nadar.
Notócque, ntocque—mucho.
tsitocue Nouain tsaj—pl. tzess—Arisco, las charatas son ariscas (miedosas).
Nouemquietá—viejo.
Noya—Ver: Hal nej noya, en la H.
to-Noy'je, noyque—camino.
to-Noyj, noycque—rastro; el *no* y el *to* según la relación, noyije (mi).
Nticquienc-lin—estar pensando.
Ntóc—mucho.
Nu-al-lecque húu—abispa lechiguana.
Nucá quii-si—contento.
Nu-c-létéss—palo para leña.

Nu-coh—mio, Ver: Mío.
Nu-cúu—todos.
Nuhj—se ha acabado.
Nu-jnayaj ahot—peste.
Nu-huoyé—delante de mí.
Numó—sueño tengo.
Nuntioquienc-lin— estoy pensando.
Nut-coh-lo-bhut—medias, tapa-pie.
Nutcnái nutcueyél—las dos manos; mano y otra mano (tocándolas). T.
Nutcueyél—otra mano, T.
Nyoccui—piola, Ver: Hilo, mucho

Ñ

Ñhiéi—prendas.

O

Oá-láj—leon.
Ob-á-cu—otra vez
Ocjni *vel* **Ojcní**—párate ó anda.
Ochayá noél—curar. Don Natalio lo curó. (mi paisano).
Ocháyá nú—D. N. me curó.
Oéc-cue (panij)—busca pan.
Oe'h—buscar (?) T.
Oél (*l* mojada)—mear, orinar.
el-Oguóye—dices que.
Ohn, hon—clama, grita.
Ohoyacke—mistol (fruto).
Ohoyácke—mistol (árbol).
Oiél—camalote; cañita, medio rastrera.
Oitaj. vel. titaj—querer, casi.
Oitaj huoién clin-no—P. qniere hacerme mal, Vea: fraguar, hacer.
nojlam hoitaj n-Oithechi—comer quiero.
l-Oj'huai—ir por la orilla del río—*h* nasal.
toj-Oitáj—te duele.
Oletxej—hebra de cháguar.
Omai—ponerse. por hacerse. Ver: Anda á ponerte, etc.
Omaís—hazte buena ó linda (*om*—mas, *d*—tu; *is*=linda.
Omaj le-huuén néla—hállame (la vela).
Om-la-ha-néj—aprende, T.
Omnie-táj—poroto.
Onú, onná—hableme.
Oni—matar, Ver: Loni.
Oniaj—poroto del monte.
Onná P.—llama á P.
Onquié—hablalo.
Op—también.
Op, ob, hôt, hlát—por.
Op-ki-lá?—¿para qué?
Opil, yopil—andate.
Optój?—¿porqué¿ también por *ob causam*, **atdyecke**.
Oteji, laja nochecuá noj oteji—soltera (sin marido) yo, yo solita.
Otejji, hoteji—uno: parando el índice.
Oteni, péj, anitócque—siempre *k-lam-mejj*.
l-Otxi-cass—collar.
Oyél—camalote.
Oyiit—ata.

P

nu-Pacui—piè.
lo-Pachu—pié.
Paj—dentro de poco.
Paj-cquié—mucho tiempo.
Paji déh—pronto.
no Papá—sentarse, Ver: Siéntate.
Pascual oitáj huoien clin nô—Pascual quiere fraguarme mal.
Pbiye—tal vez: subfijo de duda.
nu-Pe-cu-éss—bofe, melza.
Peiácque—sombra; sombra física de cuerpo opaco y sombra supersticiosa como en castellano —**topeyac**. Ver: Espejo.
Peitaj—largo.
Pej—siempre. (Ver: «visitar»).
Pejlai—llueve.
nu-Pe-ju-ess—bofe, melza.
Pélaj—blanco.
Pe-la-ta—blanco. Ver: Nubes.
Pe-lé—nubes y espíritus.
Pe-lé liptt péh—nublado (el cielo está). Ver: cerrar.
Pél-lai hi-pen—truena.
nu-Pém—tambor, pimpin.
Pené—colmena.
Pépe nomé tojnahaque—ayer volvió Pepe.
Pepe nomlá quiicuala—volverá Pepe mañana.
nu-Pe-séi—pelo del cuerpo ó vello.
Peslayp—truena.
to-Péyac hi—espejo.
Phál-tsénu—hágame el servicio.
to-Pbalcainécque jlé-tecquiú—tirante.
Phô—poner.
Phojlín—pégale.
toj-Pho-mei, toj-pom-éi—arriba, lado de.
Phom-le-léi—arribeños.

Phó-nón—ají.
o-Pil-yo-Pil—ve, anda.
Pitaj—alto. **Vel Pit-táj.**
Póc-cue houét—asador.
Pocnotáj—grieta; *c* toscana.
Pôelé nom, in huoc—nublado, viento.
Pôele, phé-lé, phé-lé—cielo.
Pôelé nom—nublado (está), T.; (nublándose).
Pôen-ne-tdé—abeja.
nu-Poké—talón. Ver: Pié.
citáj ni-Pehi-pho—quiero sentarme.
Pololotaj—caña, cortadera.
Polotáje—caña, cortadera.
nu-Péni—pescuezo, buche.
Pop-ho—siéntate, J. R.
Potxel ái potxijléin—lucero (estrella).
Pot-tsec-lai—las Cabrillas.
Potxijléin-potxel ái—estrella, lucero.
Potxin—hilar ó torcer.
Potxin aycque—que vaya á tejer.
txinai Potxintié nogüei—las chinas tejen los ponchos.
nu-Pozéi—barba (pelo).
nu-Pozet—labio inferior.
lo-Po-zet—pico (de ave).
a-Ppé, pe, ppé—sobre.
Ppéh—parir.
Puj-lin—raya pescado).
Putxaj—zambullir.
Puyen—muéstrame.

Q

nu-Quaienécque. nu-ticquié—cuñado.
Quayemé-ke—cuñado.
Quelit itój—haga fuego.
txina Quia—remedio para la china.
Quiá—conj—si.
noj-Quiáéc—nuevo. Ver cháguar, luna nueva.
Quia-ho-teüc—ucle, la planta.
Quiáj—terminación de diminutivo.
Quialáta—negro.
no-Quialó—cara. Ver: **no-Tialá.**
nu-Quiáluss—mejilla.
ta-Quia nági—barranca.
Quiaset-jloc-luoi—semilla de una enredadera de flores moradas, ó semilla de trébol. Ver: Esta voz.
Quiat-lam-méj—picar.
Quiatxú—Vilela.
Quiatxú-taj—Vilelón; Cacique Granadero.
tiuic-Quiáya—envenenada.
optój tiuic-Quiáya—porque está envenenada.
nu-Quia-yó—nieto.
nut le-Quié—pierna de hombre. Ver: Canilla.
Quiép—tiempo (de alguna fruta)—**iya-quiép**—tiempo de la algarroba.
nu-Quiécua—esposo ó esposa.
Quiécua hahiquiés?—¿sanado ha la mujer? *h* nasal.
a-Quiecua quies?—¿está sana tu mujer?
at-Quié eyque—vamos á cazar.
laja Quiéga hua'ji—soltera (sin marido).
miei aletseg, na Quieguajlei—toma el fusil y vamos á cazar.
n-Quieguajléi—vamos á cazar.
ni-Quiehto—viejo—*eh*=*e* prolongada. Ver: **Choht.**
nojlam Quiehnaclei huentiéi—yo me voy á cazar (aves).
nojlam Quiehnaclei huentiéi—yo me voy á cazar. Nótense las diversas escrituras debidas á las diversas pronunciaciones agarradas, pero que conservan analogía. Sirva de regla.
N. Quiehual-lei cuentiéi—N. fué á cazar
yelatój clet-Quiéi—pierna de caballo.
clet-Quiéi—pierna en general.
¿Quiéjóte huála noiom hauóte?—¿cuántos dias faltan á la ranchería?—**huala hotaji**—un día—parando un dedo: *j* nasal.
¿Quiejoté jel cutá enoiom hauóte?—¿cuántas canchas faltan á la toldería?
Quiejóte tan huaiey?—¿cuándo te casaste?
Quiejóte tan huaiey—casar, cuando te casaste.
nam-Quiel—no me apuro.
let-Quiel—huevos.
Quieláj-lui—semilla de achera. Ver: Achera.
Quiélouáj—Ver: **Huelaj iéi.**
Quiema huonatxi tip-ho—toma el sombrero y póntelo; *ph* entre *p* y *b* sopladas. Ver: Agarrar, ponte.
Quiematoja hüe, quiemlo toja—agárralo esto; voz de *güen* ó *huem*—doy.
nui-Quiemen tójó—esta me gusta más. De *hemin*—querer.

qualit ac-Quiémét (ligero)—trabajad muchachos.
nutsacamiécte nu-Quiemet — no podemos trabajar.
nut-Quienjlin tocque — (mostrando) hemos trabajado bastante.
nut-Quiemjliná quiicuála—trabajaremos mañana.
Quiem lo nigüen akmu—agarrar: agarra te voy á dar.
nu-Quiémo tójá—me gusta más este.
le-Quienéj—el cuchillo.
te-Quinâje—cerro, cerrania.
Quiénáj locnó—el cuchillo me ha cortado.
no-Quienéj—hermana.
nhú, ia-Quie, (vel nhí)—voy á venir, espérate.
nut-Quienjlina quiicuála—trabajaremos mañana.
ne-Quié nom—llegó recien: Ver: Luna, levanta.
Quiép—tiempo (estación).
a-Quiépo-phó — siéntate (probabl. «espera, siéntate»).
Quié-quie—catita.
Quierláir lój—F. **quiuaserlocque**—trébol (lit. comida del ciervo).
al-Quiés?— ¿sanado ha? *al* de 2ª persona é interrogativo.
Quies?—¿está sano?
nouem-Quietá—viejo (muy).
tzeloj Quietáj—cadena; *tze-lojquietaj*, Ver: collar y barriga.
ej-Quietáj—pati (pez).
a-Quié, taquié—espere. Voy á venir; *¿adepl niqûlin?*—¿á quién esperas? *niculin niyat*—espero al cacique.
no-Quietéj—boquilla, Ver: Comer.
Quietsáj—parte, divide (lo que sea).
Quiátzéj—de paja.
Quieûj—color.
al-Quieyé?—¿hambre tienes?
eegh nu-Quéiyé—si tengo.
tset-Quiicuá—víbora negra.
Quiicuála — mañana, *eras*, Ver: *Icuála*.
Quiihiél niiat—valiente hombre.
Tsetáj Quiilaliss ndtócque—Roldán tiene muchos hermanos.
Quiiilayé, chilayé—despacito, (despacio.)
nu-Quiim, nukiim—sed, (tengo).
c-Quiinacque—cuchillo.
Quiináj—fierro, Ver: Cuchillo, lo que es de fierro: metal.
at-Quiinoije nimó-vamos á dormir.
Quiioj pan—compra pan.
Quiitsaj-hi húmtde—estrecho: Ver ancho.
Quiiuaset-lóc—trébol, (comida del ciervo).
lec-Quiiútéc— guarda del sable, (cabeza. . . .)
le-Quináj, nokatmate—cuchillo.
nu-Quióje—comprar, yo lo compro.
tin-Quió—descargar un peso; *guúm lété letzej*—descargar arma.
Quio-hót—ucle, la fruta.
Quiói—cantar en general.
tom-Quiéi—seco, está.
Teuctaj tom-Quiói—el rió está seco.
Quiói, ó chioi, olaquiosa— cantar á un muerto.
ni-Quióje—comprar, yo lo compro.
nu-Quioje—comprar.
at-Quióje tsonatá niquiojla ctejè—véndame una oveja (traiga ovejas compraré una).
at-Quióje tsonatá niquióje—véndame todas las ovejas, (traiga ovejas las compro).
at-Quiój inóte—deme agua.
ac-Quiój inoti—deme agua.
at-Quiój incte isequiá itoj—deme agua y fuego.
at-Quiójloi quiéje notquióje lá yelatáj otéjé—véndame un tu caballo.
at-Quiój niquióje lá—tráelo te lo compráré.
at-Quiój niquiój lá—tráelo te lo compraré.
ac-Quiój nodéj—deme comida.
at-Quiójonéi inóte nihiát— lleve agua al patrón.
at-Quiójonói niiat inóte, jloie inottaj—lleve agua y caña al patrón.
lec-Quiol lecuaj—beba poco, Ver: *ioyej quiiojlaj*.
Quiómlin—adverbio, mentira.
nu-Quióniss—«huevos», genitales.
at-Quicópil lomohén—váyanse á dormir.
at-Quiõopil quélit lomó, vel, nomó—anda presto á dormir.
a-Quiopil—ándate á tu casa. Ver: Venid; *Chimó*.
nojlamil Quioquén houó ntóc—comprado, hemos c. muchas gallinas.
le-Quiós quiõi—cola de pájaro, Ver: Pluma.
le-Quióss—cola de pájaro.

nu-Quiotái—orejas del hombre. Ver: *Chotéi*.
Quiotoleitás—orejudos, Tobas del Teuco, orejas con tarugos.
Quiotequiá—sordo. Ver: Orejas.
eiló Quiot inot—cuidado te vas á caer en el agua.
nu-Quio-ti—suegro, nieto.
Quiotquió—caer, •cuando ya ha caído. F. *Tsitocue ó tchitocue quiotquió*—ha caído una paloma.
T. Quiótquió Teuctáj—cayó T. en el río.
nathin Quio—zambullir.
Quiotzan—preñada.
nutcon-Quioyé, nuj hot-quioyé—sepultar un muerto. Ver: Muerto, llorar.
Quiozan—preñada.
Quiuhút-tsel—cascabel. Ver: Araña.
Quiú-úej—medio, en el medio.
Quiuma—tócalo.
Qunaháque, hunajaje—ayer tarde, no supo decir, *ayer*, sin *tarde*, Ver: llegar, medianoche, noche y anoche.
Qunatxi—noche.
ia-Quqo inot—No te eches al agua. Ver: *Yaj*—no.
lo-Qun (hun)—cuello.
no-Quuila tojleitxi—mi hermana aquella es.
nu-Quuinéss—primos, as.
no Quuinij tojleitxi—hermano (mi: **quuí** muy suave.
no-Quuinij—hermano (mi: **cui** más dulce. Ver **nu Chicnó**.
nu-Quuinoliss—primos, primas.
no-Quuítáj—hermana.

S

Sacanigde-ni—no puedo.
Sa hál—sábana, camisa de tela de sahal.
Zahal—tela—tela, pedazo de lienzo. Ver Camisa, ropa.
i-Scát—robar—**escatiá**—robando
to-Séi—mojado (está). Ver **Mujer.**
Sej—subfijo de colocación arriba. Ver pestaña y brazo.
Se láje—oso hembra.
las-Sijhu lilei hepp—varas (las varas de un techo).
at-Silátha—moza (muy linda).
at-Silatha—moza.
Sinoje—perro. Ver **Cinoj.**
Sõentágo—bobo (árbol).
nis-Sohésse-hi—zapatero que los vende.
nis-Sohésse-huet—zapatería.
Stenácque palái-quié—quebracho blanco.
Suitáyaj—amor, Pedro se ha matado por amor — **Peilo li-lón-j -lam suitáyaj tamennej.**

T

Táccajái—valiente.
Tac-ca-hién—valientes (los).
Tac-hii—monte.
Tacnij jlucnáita—monte grande.
Tacnij ó tacnii—monte.
Tahuetcuecuáj—mosquitero.
ca-Tai, catái—cocina (tu).
oi-Táj—casi.
Táj—subfijo de aumento y comparativo.
Taj-cua — victoria, Ver Venecr y derrotar.
Tajny—veces(algunas). Ver Monte.
no-Tajóti—abuela.
ni-Tal—vengo.
Tamenéj (nn)—por causa de.
Tamenéjj—por causa de.
Támquiói—seco.
n.Tanéj enotaná—red.
Tapai—porongo.
Ta-pil—volver.
quíejot ¿ T-pil—¿cuando va á volver Vd?
To-pilá—volverá.
moh To-pilá jquel-lajá—te has de apurar Lit.—Ve, has de volver pronto.
taquie haoté To-pil caná— esperate voy á volver aquí.
elà no-T-piléi huelá — quiza yo pueda volver dentro de un mes.
To-pileilá huela — volverá dentro de un mes.
quiehote T-pil hepp—¿cuando volverá el vapor?
Uanclói To-pililouéte—los Tobas volvieron á sus ranchos.
Uanc-lói To-pil j-lauéte—los Tobas volvieron á nuestros ranchos.
o-pil-Topileilá que-lit — anda y vuelve pronto.
Tapini—volvió.
no-T-pint-lá huelá—volveré dentro de un mes.
no-T-pint-lá quiicuala — volveré mañana.
Tapuiecque—crecido.

Teustáj Tapuiéoque—crecido está el rio.
Taquié—pecho (tetas) de mujer ú hombre.
no-Ta quie soj—cejas, Ver Ojos.
ni-Tatanló nocaléi—voy á poner el hilo en el telar.
Tatoi—perder.
Tatuta (?)—cuatro. 4.
nu-Teuei—brazo (parte inferior).
Teuei-le-lé—arma.
ca-Tchija, catxia—malo, feo, poco -nada *(fin de frase)*.
Tdhá-yec— yo no saber.
Tde-hote?—¿cuanto?
Tdé hoté anahiil?—¿palabras cuantas son?
Tdéhn—duro.
Ten, teen— fuerte, fuertes *(?)* Ver fúerte.
Tde-nájj-hote?—¿cuando?
Td-hósscacni—de chimango, paso ó tranco.
Tdhé—¿donde?
Tdisquien—celos, T.
Tdock—cuero, piel concha de tortuga, Ver **t-Dock**.
Tdój—ucle, la cáscara.
Tdoj-cuaj—película de fruta.
no-Tecji ó **notejquii** — almuerzo, Ver comer.
nu-Tenécque—señal.
no-Teccue—yo busco.
do-Tecuiss—pestañas.
Te-cuéi quiutáj—mano grande.
no-Téi,notecluí—ojos del hombre.
no-Tej—comer.
Tejlúi—ojos de un chimango.
Tejzel iom cuná—estrellado, está bien.
Telé-sai—overo ó rosillo.
Tel-lsám, pl, **tel-lsánén**— carrera, as.
Temló—lado de *(al)*.
Temló icuála—pasado mañana.
am Tem naj?—¿estás (cómo)?
ama Tem nój?—¿y tú cómo estás?
am Tem ná less?—¿cómo está la familia?
Temcquió—lado de abajo.
Ten-te—pedernal, piedra.
Te-tsáj—humo.
Te-tsétáj—neblina.
Teuc-cquiéí—sembrad.
Teuc-huáj—arroyito.
Teuctáje—Río grande (el Río Bermejo).
Tehin-lo—necesito.
Tehj omáj liphá—coma poco.
Teutáj, F.; teuc-tá—Río (Bermejo).
Teutéj—tosca ó tierra.
Thá iejc (thájej)—yo no saber.
no-Thél—mear. Ver: **Oél**.
Thél loguei, atdeiéjè—¿cómo? Ver: Quien.
This-quiiéi—reir.
This-si-caí—pasear.
Thoecué—recoger. Ver: Muchos.
Thoecué huái, hoyaj letseni—recoger algarroba, mistol, chañar.
nu-Thoecui, hnn tocque—*a quei ndtocque*—mucho.
tscnataj Thój—cuero de oveja.
Thój-nohnhodog—uña (de pié ó mano). Ver: Cuero.
Thuancloi—Tobas de la boca del Bermejo. Ver: Orejudos. Tobas del Teuco.
Thunthe—piedra.
no-Tialú—cara. Ver: Balaña.
Tic-lá hún—abispa carán.
nu-Tiquié—nuera.
Ticckié—cuñada.
Tientein, nucatentei—boleadora, mi boleadora, mis piedras.
ni-Tijenaj—puse.
Tilocnó — muerto, matado, herido. J.
Timéc—anzuelo.
Tinquió—descargar, peso.
Tinquió, guum-lélé letaej — descargar arma.
Tiója-pé—salto.
Tip—mamar.
Tiphô — ponte el sombrero (pon arriba el sombrero que tiene), cúbrete.
Titlin-tot—tirarlo, arrastrarlo.
Ti-txi—grillo parduzco.
Titson-cquiéinló—puntalcito.
Ti-yoj-pho—saltar.
Tizán — principal, general. Ver: Cacique.
Tizan—ucle, la carne.
a-Tlejque tojnatá?—¿cuándo saliste de la tolderia?
Tle-sai—overito ó rosillo.
no-Tlin—nadar.
a-Tloi i'je? hcáh, nojoteji—¿vas con alguno? nó, sólo.
nuca-Tnat-hi—mi vaina del cuchillo.
a-Tloi: ije ó sea attoyje?—sólo ¿vas ó eres sólo?
a-Tloi yá Pepe ó atloya?—¿sólo vino Pepe? ¿con quién vino Pepe?
Tobhacuí—trampas de mimbre pa-

ra pescado.
la-Toc-lé—planta en general.
la-Toc-lé cnáj—plantita.
n-Toc-leijeje, toc-lei—pelea, riña.
Toc-lu—Ver: Toll y Caer. Frases.
Tocuitde—vecino (no léjos).
Tocnáy—léjos.
Tocnéy, a-tocnáy—muy léjos.
Tohnej—tinaja.
Toj—este.
Tohnó hóto'hi—iglesia.
Tojá tojtxi—aquí. Ver: Allá.
le-Toi—tardar.
To-iainécque—papel escrito.
nasetáj Toj, dhoj—cuero de vaca.
Tojáhi—tiempo ha, ó ello ha.
Tojcatxia, ó naiéj—deme más, es poco.
Tojelipá—poco.
Tojess—estos.
hal-Tój-huü-lij P.?—¿conoces á Pedro?
Toj-lani—ese.
Tojleín lolot tojxie—suyo, aquella es suya.
Tojleitxi, tojsam, látxi—aquel.
Tojleitxi, tojsam—él, aquel.
Tojleitxi cató—suyo. Ver: mío. *cató* posesión general.
Tojlétxéniiu—tiemdo del chañar.
Toj-licné—aquel.
Tojlistéc—cruz chica, donde se corta leña.
Toj (vel Toc) lo-ti—Mate partido (de tomar mate).
Toj locnéita, toj huéhu—grande: «el *toj* lo ponen de gusto»; «sin el *toj* no anda bien.»
Toj-lonéc—encendido.
yelataj Toj-louécque—patrón del caballo.
Tojnaj—sapo.
nun-Toj niyegde—no lo conozco.
Toj-phó—Ver: Solcito arribita y Pho-mei.
Tój-sám—ese.
non-Tój? toquigüé, tohigüe—aquellos.
Tojtxi-lei?—¿cómo se llama ésto?
Tojuiyecque—amaca.
Tojxitec—guitarra.
Tojxi, tojá, na—este. Ver: Rompe.
Toll—movimiento. Ver: **Toc-lú**.
Toll-cá—venir de.
Tollickiot—caer.
Toll-pé—caer de.
To-nej—hígado
nu-To-néc—hígado.
Tomquié—atras (abajo? río abajo) del lado de abajo.
Tonoquiitané—tortuga.
Topalcainecque—palo, tirante.
Torobé, cotiesél—cielo. Ver: estrella—catess.
Tos-cunecque—montón.
Totahéj—campana.
Tó-tét-nec-quiá—aguja ó estilo.
nu-Tot-lé—corazón.
Tot-xnlec—costal. T.
tojes Touchen—aquellos se quemaron.
To-nó-hotói—panteón de los finados.
Toz-cunec—monton. T.
Tquiemjlin, tquiemlin—trabajar.
Tse-la-tha—bueno de carácter.
Tselatha—rico, bueno.
Tsé-pop—palomita torcaza.
Tsétáj—barriga, barrigón.
Tsetáj necui inot otejcui—Roldán viajó una sola vez.
Tsiguanase—hormiga.
Tsi láta—bonito, bueno. Ver: abajo.
Tsimini, M. hustaój; a, igüelajj—luna.
Tsiná—hembra.
Tsonatáj toj ntócque—muchas ovejas.
Tsonatáj toj hotecoasi—dos ovejas.
Tsonatá tsiná—oveja hembra.
nu-Tucué—pecho.
nu-Tucué hlé-lé—alfiler, prendedor.
Tucuéy—lejos.
Tuj—Ver: *Toj*.
nu-Tuac—ombligo.
Tsé-hó-je—la ave chajá.
Tsáj-tcháj—subflijo adjetivamente.
ni-Tsaje—chancho de monte (?) era un cuerito de dicho chancho.
Tsamá—verbena colorada.
nu-Tsan—carnes, cuerpo de persona.
Tsecan—coser, Ver: Frases.
Tséh-iéss—Vía Lactea.
Tse-'hi núcáj—besame la boca.
Tsel,pl,tseliss, hutsel—panza.
ni-Tsetáj—chancho, Ver: Barriga.
Tsetan—peinate.
Tse-té-huú—cuervo.
Tsi-tde, vel ca-tsia—feo, «fiero» (como dicen los de arriba). *Tsihdi-tdé vel catsi-hiya*—feo, «fiero» (dicen los de abajo). Hay que fijarse en estos modismos, porque

dan una idea del valor de ciertas supresiones y aumentos frecuentes en este idioma.

lo-Txi-cass—collar.
Txiguánöss—hormiga, y *as* negra mordedora.
Txiguanöss ca-hút—hormiguero.
Txiiáj—chimango, (ave de rapiña).
nu-Txij-li-lépöss—puntas de costillas, Ver: varas.
Txi-hiacque—visita (él que).
Txiláj—sólo; *txilacque, txiláca.*
Txilatáj—lindo.
Txiná—hembra.
Txinai ó txinéi txilatá—bonitas son las chinas.
Txinai, txinéi—chinas.
Txina tojseíje — mujer hecha, (mujer desarrollada) Ver: Hombre hecho, mojado.
Txinéte—duraznilio (arbol silvestre).
Txi-pót-ca—maiz.
Txitocué, txitohué—chavata (gallina del monte), Ver: Gallina.
Tzoná—corzuela, Ver: Chona.
yelatáj Tzotéi—colmillo de un caballo,
Tzonatáj—oveja; *tzonatáj holéi* hilo de lana de oveja; *tzonatá huolei* lana (es la misma frase). Ver: cabellos.
Tuj-náj—mezquino.
Txulutáje—pájaro (castaño con esclerótica roja.)
Tzumo colói—espinaca (yerba como).
Txú-niss—peine.
Txutás—vibo (pez).
Tzu-pá—cera de miel.

U

nu-Uai (mi); uai, húai—miedo.
nu-Uaintxáj—miedoso.
no-Uaintxess—cobardes, los.
Uaji—moverse, (temblar), Ver: La tierra se mueve.
Uancloj úléi—pluma de avestruz.
Uasetáj laticuaiel—tres vacas.
Uasetáj tójés otecoasi—dos cueros de vaca.
Unsetáj tójés tocque—muchos cueros de vaca.
Uasétas utócque—muchas vacas—ojo á la terminación *as* y al acento en *sé*.
yapiná Ucán—los mosquitos están bravos.
Uccuinatáj lilonen—palomo pelea siempre; polomo nombre de perro, *cinojtaj*.
iajl-Ucué jlá—no muerda piojos: Fijarse en la *l* de 2ª como en algunos interrogativos y otros casos.
iajl-Ucué jlá tojnoiám—no muerda piojos delante de mi.
Ucuinatáj—paloma, Ver: Paloma y Plural.
Ucuinatas hui-yo noquié—las palomas volaron todas.
Ucunáj—borracho.
Uecno inot auecque—dele agua al patron.
h-Uecnojo—deme; *h* casi muda.
Uecnójo coset niquioj—véndame ese chiripá; deme el chiripá lo compro.
Uecnójo-hloi—véndame.
Uecnójo hloi yelatáje niquiójo quiòje aioj—véndame el caballo, te lo voy á comprar.
Uancloi Uecnójo hóué ntóc nojlamil—los Tobas vendieron muchas gallinas.
Uecnojo tajsámo nogüéi—(*taj* y *toj* se confunden). deme ese poncho.
lo-Uéj—cola de tortuga.
Ueleitxi, tojléin—allá (velo está allí).
nam-Uen—no tengo, no hay.
niquii Uenapé lohuéte—los indios han quemado los toldos. Ver: Pelear por el *pe*, y nublado.
al-Uén huasetáj?—¿tienes vacas?
hal-Uén latataj htoj,thój?—¿tienes cuero de lobo? *t* aspirada.
Uén-ni-lá noyque—hállame (el camino)
nam-Uen txitocue—no veo palomas.
Ués-saj-equia— naveta de tejer poncho, T.
no-Uète oteji—rancho (uno sólo), Ver: Uno y ranchería.
Uetxiliatáj—nombre de mujer, T.
Uétu—grande, Ver *n-Essé úétú*, General Uh.
nam-Ugüen—nada (no tengo).
am Uh, ó, iel-l—enfermo (no bueno).
am-Uh, locnó—lastimado (no sano).
am Uh: nuca amüh—lastimado, (era en el tobillo).
Uicquii—gente, familia.
Uicquii jojonnaj Uancloi—los Indios derrotaron á los Tobas.

nu-Uidójo, a-uidojo—tía mi, tu etc.
Uiiquii ia'qu'go Cigñéli—los Indios van (á trabajar) á las haciendas. Ver: Cristianos—**ir**—*g* nasal.
Uiquii—Indios de Mulato.
Uith—también, y. T.
nu-Uitóc, a-uitoc—tio, mi, tu, etc
Uitó—trabajar.
neque al-l-Ujo—corran.
i-Ukuac—picar.
Umét—apaga.
Umquió—llueve.
Uanc-quiuéj—al amanecer.
Uocuai—perro de hocico largo.
Uoc-cói—pescar.
Uossot etzacke—algarroba blanca (fruto).
Uossot etzucke—algarrobo blanco (el árbol).
Uouó, huohuó—mudo.
Uuith, uuitd, c-loya—y, con.
Uuyiss—reglas (de mujer). T.
Uyés—conejo: **hozotá t-eŭj uyés**—el viborón se ha comido un conejo.

Y

Yá-ca-tde—amarillo.
Yácséte—pescado (fresco) *necquiayéc*).
Yácséte—sábalo (pescado.)
Yac-set-quia, pl, yac-set-cutzéss—pescador, es.
Yacsette-hi—vivero de pescado.
Ya'hin—mirad.
Yáhset—pescado.
Yá-hui; yücté, ia-huc—se ha ido, se fué.
Yaj—Ver: **Iaj**—no interrogativo.
Yajlom—menos.
Yáj-lom—(—no mas—*ehom*)—más.
Yajlom is—menos pida (lit.: menos bien).
Yajjaelit—despacio (no lijero).
Ya-môêc—estiércol.
Yapiná—mosquito y mosquitos.
Yat—¿qué?
Yec, yéj, Yecke—con, y subfijo de adjetivo.
nu-Yecquia—mi naveta de tejer.
Yél. pl. yiss y yeliss—enfermo.
Yejaj ó ielaj—anta, tapiro.
Yelataj—caballo.
Yelataj ó hielatáj haj—boca de caballo.
Yelataj laticuaiel—tres caballos.
Yelatáj txina——yegua.
Yelatás ntócque—muchos caballos.
Yelatáss ntócque—muchos caballos.
Yem hihn—admirar. Ver: frases.
Yés—conejito. Ver: Comer, frases.
nu-Yial—aliento, suspiro, viento. Ver: respirar.
Yiass-teckiajai—sereno.
Yib—conj y. Ver: **Uitd**.
Yib nicquiépho, vel, Yib loc-cjai—otra vez. (Debe incluir una acción).
to-Yicque-hun—tejedor.
Yiip—otra vez. T.
no-Yi'je—camino, callejón.
Yíp—otra vez, segunda.
Yisi—también.
Yitd—verde.
to-Jojmij nuháháque Cananagai—ayer llegamos á la Cangallé.
to-Yojmilá quiicuala nohuét—mañana llegaremos á la toldería.
ti-Jój-pho—saltar.
Yom—llegar.
no-Yopil—salir.
Mº Yopil cacni nohuét séi—Mulato salió para sus toldos.
Yopil calagüethi—(está incluido *rancheria*), paseando, «voy á paseando» ojo *ca*.
Yopil calagüethi—voy paseando.
no-Yopil, no yje—vamos á salir.
Yucquii Yopil nohuéte—los Indios salieron para sus toldos.
Yopil onatxi qunatxi—vamos es noche «es talde» dijo.
ni-Yoyén hót—*y* porteña; llorar un muerto.
Yuiccuássá Granadero lotze-'hei—(para que pite), **yuicuas nuctzóe jlám, txilajtojtxi atzôêc am**—Para. Este tabaco es para Granadero, aquel para mí, ese para tí. Ver: pitar.
Yucquii por **Kuicquii**—Indios Matacos.
Yucúáss, jujuás—tabaco. Ver: comer, picar, morder y cháguar; planta en general; tal planta que se muerde, ó de quemado, *iu* en diminutivo.
yapiná Yukuacnú—el mosquito me pica.

Z

háis tojluot-Zecua?—¿te gusta pitar? *his*, mucho lindo (contesta).

En esta y en las siguientes frases la *t* forma la sílaba con *s*.
t-Zoheńoque—palo de prender fuego, dándole vuelta encima de otro de chilca.
Zohiess—estrella vista á la 1 en Agosto.
nit-Żóji cigálo—pitar un cigarro.
nut-Żijlilé—barriga, vientre ú ombligo, gajo del vientre. Ver: Gajo.
Ziphó—bonete.
nojtsi no ni-Zohéss—zapato, voy á ponerme el de pisar, (en este y en las siguientes tres frases el *ni* debe considerarse como que forma tema con *zoj* y *zojéss*.
ni-Zohess-huu—zapatero (el que los hace).
ni-Żoj not-si—zapato para pisar.
ni-Żót *ó* **sot**—zapato.
ná-Żóte—venas.
Żuphá—ph—b; cera de miel.
nu-Żutéi (P) nochotéi—dientes.

VERBOS EN SU FLECCIÓN

ABRIR

Abra la puerta—huum hla-pé. T.
No puedo abrirla—nisacanigtde nenguum, T.
Abreme—huum áj la-pé, T.
Está abierto—ta-cu-icquié *y* tá-ju icquie, T.

ACARREAR

Leña: acarrear, madera— ahloi: hot nan nei.
Un barril lo tiran acarreando agua—ualin titlin-totnanij inot, T.

ACORDAR

Acuerdate—a-hóès-sec-néyei (é—óë), T.
Acuérdate de las cebas (orejas del arma—a-hóès-sec-néyei letzec cquiutéi, T.
Me he olvidado—laj-nu-hes-cquiáe. T.; **me he olvidado.**
Me acuerdo de un muerto—nonticquiena, T.

ADMIRAR

Las mujeres se admiraban—atzinai yem hihn (h para prolongar sonido), T.

AGARRAR

He agarrado el tigre, le he quitado mi hermana—Notquióèmma áyój nissúyec nuquiinnó.
Lo he agarrado le he prendido una puñalada — notquióèma ni-tnó pójej lec-quiinaj.
De repente pega el salto contra mí—ni-yáin-natá tec-quiái nuyéi, T.
Y le he agarrado el cuchillo, le he prendido otra vez una puñalada—yib notquióéma lecquiinaj nótpojet, T. Ver: **Pelear, hemos peleado.**
Agarra, te voy á dar—ámú quiem nigüen á mu.
Cada vez que te veo me da gana de agarrarte—toj-na-háiain pej 'ho-té nu-cquióèm-mi áma, T.
Algún día por sí acaso puede ser

que caigas en mis brasos—tá-i-cual-i-'hi-'hi-la tát nóji-tdét pa máyic, le-equie-otu-hum tdel-lá-tát notqué-véi, T.
Yo tambien digo lo que usted dice—hote nujlam yib ni-guûi toj lo-huúyei, T.
No se vaya á olvidar estas palabras (que le doy) — améjná (adios) yaj a-'héss séj léj-té-jiá nujla-hí-ná, T.
Lo que le he dicho no se vaya á olvidar—uiyéi-lá tój-háj niquuuyi yaj a'hóèssèc let-té-jia, T. Lit. **¿Va á hacer?**
Yo también no me voy á olvidar las palabras que me has dado—'hote nujlám nu-he-séc jlé-ti-yiégde a-'hiñe lo-huen nu-'ho, T. Ver: **Agarrar, Frases.**
Bueno, adios, ya me voy—e, nujlámejná nu-cquií-la dát, icual i-'hi-hi-lá dat nu-tpin-lá pbiye, T. Ver: **Ir en Frases.**
Basta, no hay más, sólo usted, ahora converse—táj tzil-lecque laj-el-lecquie tzil-lac ám oubh-aj om-jlin. T. **Fin de día.**

AHOGAR

Kuevito se ha ahogado—nigüegúu hiquiá. T.
A Kuevito lo han ahogado—Nigüegúu tinquiáhát, T.

ALZAR

Alzad—quiúma. T.
Venid á alzarlo—atcquié quioema.

ANDAR ó IR

Andate—achimô, mmóh, ach y aquy.
Vamos—acquiimôh.
Andate—aquiópil.
Fusil: toma tu fusil y vamos á cazar — aletzej: miei = naqui-eguajlei.
Andate: ligero á dormir—atquio opil: quelit lomó *vel* nomó.
Vamos á dormir — atquynoije nimó.
Váyanse á dormir—atquiiopil lomohém.
Anda á cocinar—mmóh cataijlá.T.
Anda llega al Teuco—mmóh oméi Teuc om-ia-lá Teuc;omacá-Teuc-cuei.
Pedro se fué al Fuerte—Pedro ia-huc-náj cá Fuelte-yei, T.
Yo me fuí al Fuerte—nojlám nui-hu yei na Fuelte; nojlám nui hu naj-ca, F. yei, T.
¿Cómo te va?—¿am tecná? T.
Bien y ¿á vos cómo te va?—¿eh ámajtecná? T.
Ahora me voy—necquie nu-yicque, *vel*, necquia nuquiilá.
¿Adónde se ha ido tu tio? — ¿dté i hu-hin né iutóc?
¿Ande se ha ido tu tía?—¿tdé-ihu-hin uidoj?
¿Para ande se ha ido? —¿théné ya'hu'hi, T.
Por acá ha ido—ti-iocqie toj'hi. T.
Vamos á tomar—acquii-nayot.
Me voy al Fuerte — nuihu-yei Fuerte, nuihuc Fuerte yéi. T.
Vamos á la Colonia—acquii ina-huijii còlonias, T.
Vamos á pescar á la Colonia—achiimó inatzíccái Colonias, T.
Anteayer todos fueron á la Banda — icuála nátzu iquiénnaji nuhúu c-lipél, T.
¿Ande han ido todas las chinas?—¿dtde nei'hu-'hi atzínai, T.
Han ido á recoger algarroba—iquiéi (*vel* ijiei *vel* ihiei); hú-hái. T.
¿Ande vas?—¿téc-la 'hu'he?
Voy para arriba—núi'hújphó.
¿Has ido «nunca» á la Colonia?—yáj ínnémíd ia-húye Colonias, T.
Nunca he ido á la Colonia—icnémíd nuihúye Colonias, T.
Vamos para allá—acquiináhuc-ca-ní, T.
«Vamos para acá»—acquii inahuvej can-ní, T.
«Vos» no has andado nunca á la Colonia—hlé-'hi'hi-tdé Colonias am, T.
Mentís, no has andado á la Colonia—má-ti-tdé le'hi'hi-tdé Colonias, T.
Cierto he andado—mát nu-ii'hina'-ji, T.
No te creo—nam am catquiéû, T.
Yo no te creo—ná-ai catquiéûhi-de, T.
Cierto he andado, pregunte si no cree—mát nu-'hi'hináji iutzanéj, c-lé ayijé, T.

El Comandante se va para Tucuman con toda su gente, con los soldados—Comandante iahúcque (*vel* iahuiei) Tucumán c-loyá canniijutáj soldados, T.
El C. se fué á Tucuman con toda la gente—yicté (iúhuc) Tucumán c-loyá nihuutáj nujtzi C., T.
C. se fué á Tucuman con todos los soldados—C. iúhúc Tucumáni inucu-atzi soldados, T.
Se ha ido—yá-huí, T.
Se fué—yiicte *vel* ia-húc, T.
Se va—yahú-yei, T.
Pedro va al Puerto—P. yohiu Fuélte, T.
Pedro se fué á la Colonia—P. yohuyjé Colonias, T.
Vete á la banda—ni-hu huiéi c-lipél.

APAGAR

Apaga el fuego—umét i-tój, T.
Apaga la vela—umet uéla, T.
No puedo apagarla—no-iumét-tidde, T.
No quiero, no puedo apagarla—moltéji, noyúmet tidde, T.

APRENDER

¿Quieres aprender?—hal-tdein-lóc la-ha-nejé, T.
Si quiero—eéh no-teinláh, T.
Aprende pues—óm-la-ha-néj, T.
Porqué no aprendiste?—atdéyéj yac-hannyáij, T.
Porque no quise—op-tój nomhuuyáii, T.
Porque no pude—hop-tój namsac-sanije, T.
Sí, quiero aprender pronto—eeh no-teinló caelítt quiuecuen núyeje, T.
Voy á aprender—núihan-niquiá, T.

ATAR

Atemos á los prisioneros—oyiten nicuen-cai, T.
Ata el perro—oyiit cinoj, T.
Atemos los perros—oyttén asínos, T.
Ata la oveja—oyiit tzonatáj, T.
Átenla á la vaca—oyitt quiiuasétaj, T.
Átenlo (al prisionero)—oyiit níc-cuenécque, T.

ATROPELLAR Ver AVANZAR

AVANZAR

Huevito avanzó á los Tobas y los corrió—Ni'huéhu ilonén Huanjloi jojonné, F. Ni'huéhu inéja. Huanjloi taj jojonné, T.
Los Tobas van á avanzar á Huevito—Uancloi huetaj ilonen Nihuehûu, F. Uancloi. aitaj inéhía Nihuéhûû.
Vamos á atropellar la ranchería—húuacken-no quep-péi, *ó*, húua kel-la hep-péi, T.
El año pasado los Tobas avanzaron al Puerto—c-lóp ej-láji Uancloi en-néyanáji Fuelte.

BAILAR

Baila (tú)—cátin, catiajlin, T.
Bailar—taj-ca-tin. T.
Bailemos—inát-catín, T.
Bailen—cati-nén.

BAÑAR

Bañémonos—hu-un nanái, T.
¿Quieres bañarte?—ait-táj lonahii, T.
Vamos á bañarnos—atquii nánahién.

BEBER, CHUPAR

Aquella china bebe—atziná litzé i-ió *ó*, i-hió, T.
Este año los Indios han chupado mucho—yácquii-pha hiucquii iio (i-i'ót), T.
Bebe pues—quelítt iyóije, T.
Han bebido—i-íót.

BESAR

Deme un beso en la boca—tze-'hi núcáj, T.

BRILLAR (ser lindo)

Aquella estrella brilla mucho—catéss a-litze is-sí, T.
Que lindo brilla aquella estrella—yat-tzilataj is-si catéss, T.
Que «lindos» brillan aquellas estrellas—yát is-sis catésstzéi *iticquie*. T.
Esta noche la luna es muy clara

(«va á estar linda»)—hunatziná igüeláj is-si hin-lá, T.
Aquel fuego resplandece mucho—«vea aquel fuego como arde, se levanta y se abre»—dtéjí (*ó* tdejí) itój liné lacuác (vapor) yiaj-pho lincquiéni, T.

BROTAR

Está brotando el pasto—hé ptoll, T.
Ya ha brotado el mistol, las flores—o'hóváj lahua tóll. T.

BUSCAR

Busco una peseta que he perdido—notéccue lussealis tá-toi, T.

CAER

P. cayó del caballo—P. tol-lpé yelatáj, T.
P. cayó de la barranca en el río—P. tol-la-ppé tequienáj nicquiot inót; T. Lit. Pedro cayó de la barranca abajo al agua. Cae, pórque se mueve de arriba ó de encima.
P. cayó de la barranca en el fuego—P. tol-la-ppe ni-cquioto itój.
Hoy el sereno ha caido del cielo—icualanéna viáss tuc-lú pelhé, T.
P. cayó en el Río—P. ni-cquiotei Teutáj, T.
Caigas—Ver: **agarrar, frases.**
P. cayó en un madrejón—P. nicquiótei hlem (lhem) quiitaj, T.
P. cayó en el fuego—Pedro nicquioto itój, T.
P. cayó de un arbol—P. tol-lu anió, *vel* anj-ló, T.
Vas á caer vas á sestear por allá—leccquiotlá cán-nií, leccquiotlá equi, T.

CASARSE

¿Quieres casarte conmigo?—átquié nû-i-ámmej?
No te vas á casar—yájta-huaiéi-la.

CERRAR (Tapar)

Cierra la puerta—phú-hi la-pé.
No puedo cerrarla—sacanigde ni-pbu-hi.
Cierra la puerta—pbu-hi la-pé. P.
Eclipse ¿«porqué está tapado?»—atdéj i-al-put in'hia'hi, T.
Tapate la cara (toda)—mphú-phé átéi. T.

COCER

Cocer—Ver: **Cocinar.**

COCINAR

Anda á cocinar—mmoh' cataijlá *ó* mmóh cateinjlin, T.
Cocina—catái, catéi, T.

COMER

Come—dthécque, T. thécque.
Coman—ddecquién, T.
Comamos—inát ddicquién, T.
Aquella China come—atziná litzé dthécque, T.
Coma, hombre—caelit (*vel* jél-lit) thécque, T.
He comido—nu-théc-quié, T.
No quiero comer, no como—no-tecquii-tdé, T.
Ayer he comido una paloma—nu técua'ji uj-cuinatáj icuála-náji, T.
Ayer los Indios comieron una vaca—icuála-náji uicquié teuc quiiuasetáj, T.
Ayer los Indios comieron las vacas—icuála náji uicquié tecuén quiiuasetáss, T.
Tú ayer te comiste una oveja—ama'h icuála ná'ji loctéùc tzonatáj. T.
Tú ayer te comiste las ovejas—am-tzámmej icuála ná'ji lócteucuén tzonattás, T.
Vosotros ayer os comisteis una oveja—amil lóctecuaj tzonataj icuála ná'ji, T.
Vosotros comisteis las ovejas—amil lotecuénnáji tzonatáss, T.
Pedro come con el Comandante—Peiló thécque tetáinlo Comandante, T.
Ayer nosotros comimos una oveja—icuála náji innamil yátecuáje tzonatáj, T.
Ayer nosotros comimos las ovejas—icuála naji innamil yatecuén tzonatáss, T.
Son pescadores (que comen pez)—cjat—tel yacsetcut.
El tigre ha comido una china, el marido la echó de menos, y la

hija tambien lloró por la madre (por ella) que la había comido el tigre—aiyój teûc atziná lec-quieccuá iguat yip toj-sé taj-hu-lin yoyen locu toj ayój teûc T.
Le dice el hermano mayor, de vicio lloras, no llores, no ha de volver; yo lo siento tambien, pero que le vamos á hacer—lec-quilá tojasnáque qui-hie'l yuc yac-taj-hu-lin, hot-tuc tápini nuya uitd nuyoyin dtat. T.
Ayer el tigre casi me la comió á mi hermanita; pero lo he visto—ayiój *icnaje* (icualá nâje) tecuuitaj nucquiinnó-cúá — tac-nii uénij. T.
He agarrado el tigre, le he quitado mi hermana—notquiœmma áyój nissúyec nuquiin-no. T. Ver: **Agarrar, frases.**
He comido—nu-thec-quié.

COMPRENDER

¿Comprendes vos?—hal-ha-néj? T.
No comprendo—núi-haniiegde.

CONOCER

¿Conoces á Pedro?—hal-tój-huil-lij Peilo? T.
Lo conozco—nu-tój huil-lij. T.
No lo conozco—nun toj niyegde. T.; namtoj-lécque. T. (Lit. yo no lo conozco).
Me conoces?—hal tó huel núyec-que (*ó* nuyej). J.
No te conozco — nun-tojniigtde ámej.
¿Lo conoces á este hombre?—holtá huil-lij hinutzi. T.
Lo conozco—nu-to-cuil-lij (*ó* huil-lij). J.
No lo conozco—nu-tój-niyégtde. T.

CONTESTAR

Contesta—cquiœl.

CONVERSAR

¿Quieres conversar en Toba?—¿hói-táj lo-guu-'hí Uancloi jla-ñhíi, *vel* jla-ñhíya, *vel*, hñiya. T.
«No conversando», no quiero conversar, no converso—nutaniitde (notau hniit-de), nutau-hñii-iegtde. T.

CORTAR

Cortar pasto—ahutaj hepp.
Cortad—is-sét. T.
Cortad mucha leña muchachos—omnítócque hal-ló tojlis-sét, *vel* litzét. T.
Vamos á cortar leña—acquii inis-sét hal-ló. T.
Vamos á cortar leña para el vapor—atquii inis-sét hal-ló vapol hle-téss. T.
Córtate el pelo—is-sétquie etécque, T.
Corte el pasto—is-sét há-lo, T.
No puedo cortar—nuyísti-de, T.

CORRER, Ver DERROTAR

COSER

Sabes coser—halhauej lat-titzecan.
No sé coser—nuija nigde nutzecan.

CREER

Ver: **Andar ó Ir.**

CURAR

La china está curando al enfermo—atziná ilójeje tojiil, F.
Los Indios están curando al enfermo—uícquié ilojéje tojiil-nén.

DAR

Deme carne ó pan—huennuho pan quiéc-huena quiuhuasetáj. T.
Deme caña (tambien aloja)—tze-cuiolé inotaj, jloya qiuhá. T.
Deme un arma—tzé nutcué-lé-lé, T.
Deme las armas—tzé nutcué, lé-léi, T.
Deme todo—uuic-nuho lac-húno, T.
No me dé todo—yaj-luchuno, T.
Deme un pedacito—tzaj, *ó*, tzej jlip-páj, T.
Denos pan—huen, namúnquie pan, T.
Deme pan—huen nújo pan (—*h*), T.
Me has de dar Mas despues—huin-na-nuho *páj*, T.
Deme más—ôhm ueju, T.

Deme menos (no grande)—yajlom is, T.
Dame pañuelo—tzáj *nucul*, T.
Dame fuego—achój itój.
Dame agua—acquiiój inot.
Dame, comer—acquiioj nodéj.
Dame tabaco—achójlej aquiiój yucúas.
Dame agua y fuego—atquiiój: inote isequiá itój.
Dele fuego al patrón—auécque: uecnó itój-patron.
Deme harina y tabaco—atzé hlip-pe halina *itith* incuás. Tob. *op uennö'ho*, T.
Deme los sables—atzé matzétáss, T.
Trae aquel sable—atquiój matzetáj lic-né, T.
Deme ese sombrero—atzé guucná tojlet-ti ámej, T. *vel* atzé guucna lani, T.
Deme harina y tabaco—atze hlípe halina hiséj iucuuás, T.
Dame—ucn-nó'ho, T.
Dume un beso en la boca—tzé-'hinucáj, T.
Dale agua al caballo—yoyén yelataj, *vel*. huecnó inot yelataj, T.
Dele agua á los caballos—húin-nó inót yelatáss, T.

DECIR

¿Qué dice esta palabra?—¿ddé huuyei anaj (ó inaj) hii ná? T.
¿Qué dice tu mujer?—¿dthe *vel* tde-úi atquiécuá, T.
Dije—ni-guúyi.
Dice—huui, uui.
¿Qué dice?—dthé *ó* tdé-uui?

DEGOLLAR

Degüella la oveja—lon tzónatáj.
No la degüello—niloni-tdé, T.
No puedo degollarla—nis-sac-canigdé nilon, T.
Pedro ha degollado una oveja—Pegro ilon tzónatáj, T.
Los cristianos han degollado una oveja—Ciguéle ilón tzónatáj, T.
Los Cristianos han degollado las ovejas—Ciguélayis ilonén tzonatáss, T.
Pedro ha degollado las ovejas—Pegro ilonen tzonatáss, T.

DEJAR

Hemos peleado con el tigre, hemos dejado la huella no más—nut-toc-leyecque ayój yomét *nuhueten* hóte-tá-zú: quiere decir que dejaron pisado el pasto y campo.

DERROTAR

Esta vez derrotamos (derrotaremos) á los Tobas—necquiá yachál jli-hin-lá Uanc-loi, T.
La primera vez nos han ganado y nos han corrido—tojáj néctáj-cojonánina nunej yéc hal icnac mi. T.
Granadero corrió á los Tobas—G. tac-ho-hon-néj Uanc-loi, T.
Estos Indios corrieron á los Tobas—Uícquiitojá tac-ho-hon-néj Uanc-loi, T.
Yo los he corrido, son cobardes—nu-co-hon-nej-hiaje. nu-áintzés-sájé, T.
Los he corrido, los he matado—nu-co-hon-néj hiáje, nilon-né-náje, T.
Lo he corrido, lo he muerto á Pedro—nui-hon-linája ni-lon-náji Peilo, T.

DIBUJAR

Quién: dibujó ó hizo esta yica?—¿At déhj: lenecque helé?; *déhj*= *depl*, se confunden.

DISTAR

¿Cuanto es distante la ranchería?—¿the h'óté lo-huói hép-péi.

DIVIDIR (Ver Partir)

DORMIR

¿Cuantas veces dormiste con la china?-tde hóté toj-lamóyij atzina.
Hoy Pedro ha dormido con una china—icuálana (nenna) P. imóyéj atzina. T.
Hoy Pedro ha dormido con muchas chinas—icuálana (nenna) P. imoihien atzinai nitocque. T.
El año pasado P. durmió con Z.—P. móyej c-lúp ejlaj-lu-li-cquíecua. T.

El año pasado P. durmió con Z y con A—clup ejlá-je P imóyiej A huitd M, T.
Dormid—la-móh, *vel* d-lámó, T.
Vamos á dormir—at quinamóh, T.
No quiero dormir—ni-mó-'hitdé, T.
Sí, quiero dormir contigo—eeh ni-huûyei nimój-lá ámejque.
Quiero dormir contigo—aitáj nimó'hi àmejque.
Adonde dormiste anoche?—ttenelmo'hi unatzinéna, T.
Dormí dentro de la Iglesia—nimó *neccui* tohuo-cotóhí, T.
Dormí afuera del Fuerte—nimó'hi Fuelte ca-ajlû, T.
Dormí dentro de la carpa— lomócuí tohuuecué cuáj, T.
Quiero dormir contigo, te he de dar prendas—aitaj nimóhi amejque, ni-huuén-lá-amu (*vel* acmu) imagñ-hiéi, T.
Has quedado contenta— yaj necquia a-is-c-lin, T.
Si, he quedado contenta—eeh nucaquii-si, T.
No he quedado contenta — núcaquii sihítde, T.
Vas á dormir con la chinita allá de los ranchos, cuando lleguemos—lo-mói-quiá atzi-na péi-'he hêp-péi, quiá yóm-mi, T.

ENTRAR

Quiero entrar—aitáj nuihuhi cué hepp.
Entren—huiyai cquiu-cui hépp. T.
Entrad al rancho—hu-cuí hépp. T.
No quiero entrar—nûi 'huhí tdé c-cui hépp. T.
Quiero entrar—ait-táj, nui-huhi c-cué hépp. T.
Entra—'huc-cuu-i hépp. T.
Entra—'huc-cuu-i. T.

ESPERAR

Espérame hasta pasado mañana—ni-hui-la-nu-cqiúya, cquia temló (*ó* tem-lhó) icuála. T.
Te he esperado antes de ayer — ni-ni-'hui-náj ach-cqiúya icuala ejlaje. T.
Te estoy esperando desde el otro dia—ni ni-'hui-tdát acqiúya icuala ejlaje. T.
No porque debe esperar á Dn. N.—nucquie núclintde.
Te voy á esperar — naái ní-juíllínaj.
Espera un poco—ta hií ayij, T.
No te espero—naái ni-ju-hil-linthe.
Esperad un poco—ta hii hén ayíj, T.
Espera—aquié, a-quié.
¿Aquién esperas? —atdepl:— niqulin.
Este es el último, ya me voy á ir, me han de estar esperando—tojá-táj tzil-lac, nucquiila; ticnijhulin-nupbiyé, T.

ESPULGAR

Espulgame la cabeza —acquiiuncaná (*ó*, achiiuncaná) ôe'he (*ó* e'hóe) nucletéc, T.
Ya te he espulgado en la cabeza —yá-né, nutôec yá-hi étc. T.

ESTAR

¿Cómo estás?—¿thé-pá a'hoté, T.
Estoy bien—nu-is, (is=his), T.
No estoy bien—nu is tzithe, T.
Cómo está tu mujer? — tde-'hote achécua? T Hiss-bien. T.
Si: aquí estoy y no pensaba que habias de venir—eeh, nui-caná, nam ti-hi am-quié. T. (nam=nu y am negativo).
¿Qué estás haciendo?—tdeh ahóté. T.
¿Estás sano?—iss c-lin?
Estoy sano—nu íss. T.
Estoy enfermo—nufil. T.
No estoy bueno, estoy mal — ni tsí thé. T.
Que está quieto—tac-h-tzin, T.
¿Dónde está el Comandante?—¿dthé'hije, T.
Allá está—ic-cac-ni. T. ic-ní, yícqué-n-ni.
Está con las reglas—uuyiss hiyej. (i).
¿Estás con las reglas?—háuuyiss ianej?
Si estoy—éh i-nuyij.
No estoy—uuiss ihitdé núyij.
M. está tardando—to-tói.
Esta noche está muy oscura—hunátziná icquiá-laj-quió.
El mío no está lleno el tuyo está más lleno—Nujló topuhigde *hom* otte puyéj, T.
Ah! que habias estado—j-lé pá *canâ*.

¿Adónde está el tiro ó carga?—tdéhuu letzej jluná-ji, T.
Está dentro del fusil—hi'je letzéj, T.
Los perros están peleando—assen (?): cinot toj lilonas-sén.
¿Cómo estás?—am-tec-na' ¿y *am--tem-náj?*
Bien ¿y vos? ¡ah que habías estado!—eeh, amajtécnáj-lé-pá canná T.
¿Cómo estás?—dthé-pá a'hoté?

GANAR

Pedro me ganó dos reales ¿y á tí?—P. yéc-cálli nucálus sealis, tdéui am? T.
A mi 4 ¿y á vosotros?—tój vec--cal-li nucá cuatlo, tdeui amil? T.

GRITAR

Aquellos Indios están gritando al enfermo—Uicquié ilòjeje tojicnen, T.

GUSTAR

«Te gustó á vos?»—yiaj-lahénen quié? T.
Te gustó?—al-hémen noye?
Tu me gustas—aj-hémen no; énáihemen?
¿«Te gusta á vos la aloja»?—haltáhcón-hú-á-á. T. Ver: Rico
Sí, me gusta — eh, nuicónni. T; Ver: Rico.
Te gusta la carne asada?—al-hemén huasetaj iû?
Te voy á quitar si me gusta—ni--sôûnlá-áj quiá nuihémen, T.
Si me gusta—eeh acóje, T.
No me has de quitar porque me quieres á mi—lo-suhi-tdé nuyijobtoj ha-hémenno, T.
Porque me gusta ó porque es lindo—ob-toj noihemin. *ú* ob-toihiss, T.
¿Te gustan?—hal-hemin? T.
Está bueno, muchas gracias—eeh nucéaquii si. T.

HABER

Este año ha habido mucha algarroba—yácquii pha hu-áícquie; *vel*, lú-pa hu-a-icquie, T; lú-pa y lú-pha.

HABLAR

¿Sabes hablar como ellos?—yajlahanéj tojiónuitó?
No sé hablar como Vd.?—omlanhii hoté hi tde amhii.
Hable—a-'hu-ui, T.
Siga no más á hablar—cjaelit omitquié, añhii, T.
Con quien estabas hablando?—addep náj-pa la-tahuuiyej? T.
Con Granadero—notahuiyejiáj Gr, T.
Si quieres te voy á hablar—halguui tojniguui (g=h) noctahui--áma, T.

HACER

Vamos á hacer la lección—'húua inaguu anahil-lá, T.
Hágame una yica—huuaj hén-léya, T.
Hágame una yica para mi—huuáj nucléya, T.
¿Que estás haciendo?—tdéh'hote, T.
«Haga una yica para vos»—huuéya am, T.
Siempre hace calor—ni-cquiéjpho quiujoi-taj, T.
Lo he hecho coleto—nuiyen cjaiœcquioé yá, T; Ver: Quedar.
¿Que haces?—atjléni.
Hoy hace más calor que ayer—icuálana hamquiœj oitáje icualanaji quiæj oitaj 'hí-tde, T.
Ayer hizo más calor—icualanáje hómquiuj-oi-táje, T; *vel.* hómquiœj-táj.
Hágase el pan—gúu *ó* húu pana, T.
¿Qué estás haciendo?— atc-j-léniguiéi, T.
«Hacete bueno»—omaís.
Te estás haciendo buena—é-homo a ís-sia, T.
Hoy hace mucho frío—icuálaná nitecquiojquie, T.
Hoy hace mucho calor—icuálanénna quiuj oit-táj, T.

HALLAR Y PERDER

Porque me hallo malo—obtoj nissá, T.
Hállame las velas—amáj *vel* omaj--le hu-uen uéla, T. (Este *halla* más bien es *prepara*, ó algo así).
¿La has hallado?— há-lahuené, *ó* al-lagüene, T.

No la he hallado—níhueníthe né, T.
Buscala y la hallarás—ôêc-cue lahuenlá, T.
¿Cuándo la perdiste?— cthenajhoté toj tó-tói?
La perdí ayer—tatói icuála nájtzó, T.

IR Ver ANDAR

JUGAR

Jugad—cqúhíáss. T.
No queremos jugar—nucquhithe, *vel*, nucqû-nithe, T.
No quiero que juegues con las chinas— nuhe-nó hiyig-tde lócjuihién atzinai.
Están jugando los muchachos—yá-cu-i inotzass, T.

JUNTAR

Se iuntan los caciques—j-li-scún canniatéi, T.
Vienen juntándose los caciques—j-lái-hie-tum-quié canniatéi, T.

LANCEAR

M. ha lanceado á F.—M. yiahecquió F.
Los Indios han lanceado á F.—Uicquii itzonjlin, F. T.

LARGAR

Larga el perro—hláni cinój, T.
Larga la oveja—c-laní tzonatáj, T.

LASTIMAR

Por causa tuya me he lastimado—lo-tanen núyej imácque inúyej, T.

LATIR

El corazón late todavía—cjamáj-*-lo-thuht-lè* tánáj-phó, T.
Ya no late etc. etc—*iném* thuht-lé *náj-po*, T.
El pulso ya no late—tácuéi iném tduhtlé náj-pó, T.

LAVAR Ver LIMPIAR

Lávate la cabeza—c-léj etecque, T.
Lávese—ac-léj-lin.

LEVANTAR

El sol se levanta—icuála inne-phó (onné-phó), T.
La luna sale—iguéláj in-ne-phó, T.

LIMPIAR

Limpiate el moco—léj anicquiil, T.

LLAMAR

Porqué me han llamado?—obtój totòn núyei? T.
Cómo se llama aquella agua?—at-te p-lei inót litzé, T.
Cómo se llama: el patrón?—atjléi nyat, niiat.
¿Como te llamas?—ateleihiam, atqleiam, atpleiam?
Llama á Pedro—o-nná, P.
Después de la leccion (contesta)—quién-nilléij papel toj niga 'hinni, T.
¿Cómo se llama esto ó aquello?—¿at-te p-lei tója tójlíne, T.
¿Cómo se llama ese arbol?—¿at-te -p-lei han-ló laní, T.
Se llama mistol—p-léi *vel* c-léi ho-yúc, *vel* ho-yúéc, T.

LLEGAR

¿Hasta donde llegaste?—tden-náj toj-jlo-mei? T.
Llegué hasta la Colonia?—nu-iom -ei Colonias, nu-iom-inaj Colonias, nu-iom Colonias-ei, T.
Anda llega al Teuco—mmóh oméi Teuc om-ia-lá Teuc omacá Teuc -cuei, T.
Hoy llega P.—icuala-na nom P, *vel* icualánna nom. P. T.
¿Cuando llegaste?—¿dténaj'ho té tojlónóm, T.
Ayer llegué al Fuerte, hoy he vuelto del Fuerte—nuyom-méi Fuelte icuála ná'j, icualaná not--piní nut-j-léi Fuerte, T.

LLEVAR

Lleva allí—'hom-cac-ni, T.
Lleve agua al patrón—atquiój onéi inóte nihiat.

LLORAR

¿Por que llora la china?—at-téjya tacui-iaclin tzina? T.
Aquella china llora siempre—atzina licné ni-cquiéj-phó tajhulin, T.
El hermano varón quihiél (grande)—yucle dice—yajtaj-hulin—de vicio lloras, no llores—*hottuc* tapini, no ha de volver.
Aquellas chinas lloran al muerto—alzinái litzé yoyén tójiil-l, T.
La china llora al muerto—atziná yoyén tojiil-l, T.
Porque está envenenada—obtój tiuicquiáyá, T.
Aquella china llora—atziná litzé tajhulín, T.

MADURAR

Ya está madura la algarroba—hú-á nécquiá iú, T.

MANDAR (Enviar)

Luna, mándame algarroba y mistol—Igüelaj tatá núyei ju-uái isejiá ho-yáj, T.
Manda este pez á P.—tatéi yacsét P. T.
Estas cositas las mando para tu mujer—imai cuassá nita-téi a -quiécuá, T.
Si no tiene caña mande aloja—quiac-úéna, (quiéh huéna) inotaj tat-noi iqûha, T.

MATAR, MORIR

Mátenlo pronto—caelít hlón, T.
El Cap. mató á los Indios—Cap. ilonen uicquìi, T.
Los Indios mataron al Cap.—Uicquii ilón Cap. T.
M. mató á P.—M. ilón P.
M. mató á P. por celos—M. ilón P. objtáj tdisquien, T.
P. casi me mató—P. oitaj ló-ni nú, T.
P. por amor se ha matado—P. li -lón jlám suitáyáj ta-mennej, T.
Ha muerto por la víbora—P. tzajquietáj tamennéj iil, T.
Está muerto—iél-l, T.
Está enfermo—iélc-lín, T.
Los Tobas están matando á los Cristianos—Uanc-loi ilonén cigüéle, T.
Yaguane está matando á los Cristianos—Yaguaní ilonén cigüéle T.
Los Tobas están matando á los Cristianos—Uanc-loi ilocniahén ciguéle, T.; ilonén = ilocniahén.
Huevito mató á Mulato—Huevito ilón Mulato, T.
Los Tobas estan matando á mulato—Uanc-loi ilocnén Mulato, T.
Los Tobas mataron á Mulato—Uanc-loi ilonté Mulato, T.
Mulato mató á Yaguane—Mulato ilonté Yaguané, T.
Hace tres años los Tobas mataron á Wilken—tóháji c-lúp laj -ticuáya-él ilónáje Wilken, T.
No me mates, soy amigo—yacjlón -nu na-agúucque, T.
¿Quién ha matado á Pedro?—atdhe ilón, *vel*, atthilón Peiló, T.
Mátenlos—hlon-nén, T.
Mátame—hlón-nú, T.
Mátalo—hlón, T.
P. ha muerto de una picadura—P. íil-lej ima yicque *luc-hec-que* T.
P. está muriéndose—P. necquiá iil, T.
Los Indios están muriendo de hambre—Uicquii yl-lehién na-in -ló, T.
Los Indios están muríendo de frío—Uícquii yl-lehién hui-yet, T.
P. murió de una puñalada—P. iil -léj loecquìi-naj. T.
Ha muerto?—h'a-iil, T.
Pedro fué matado—Peigro tilón.
Pedro murió de un flechazo—P. ilonéj lú técque Paulo, T; **de un macanazo**—et-téj-táj, T.
Es muerto—ha-yil-l, T.
Y después he muerto el tigre, yo había sido más valiente que el tigre—Uac-jaltá nilon hom nicnú ya-pa ayioj, T. Ver: **Sacar «y de ahí»**.
No ha muerto, respira todavía—yignigtdé, camáj tiál, T.
Sí, ha muerto—eeh iil, iil eéh, T.
Pedro fué matado por Pablo—Pailo tamenej Peigro tilon, T.
Pedro le pegaron una puñalada y murió con cuchillo—P. tinopjej lecquiinaj iil, T.

Pedro murió de veneno—P, iil-lej toj cacquia (no remedio), T.
Mató—ilón, ilonté,
Mataron—ilonté.
He matado—ni-lon-né-náje, si son muchas las víctimas, y **ni-lon -náje**, si es una sóla.
No he matado nada—mam-lóní tdat.

MIRAR

Mírate en el espejo—ya-'hin topéyac hi, T. Ver: **Espulgar**.
«Mírate á vos» (el cuerpo entero) —a-yá-'hin-clin lec-que, T.
Ya me he mirado del cuerpo, estoy muy linda—ni-ya-'hinjlin nu-tzán tá, ni-tzilatá, T.
Mírelo—yiácnéi, T; yiáic-néi,
Ve aquel hombre—ya 'hin leg hinnuzo, T.
Mírate—ya-hín.

MORDER

Muerde el piojo—ucuuaj jlá, T.
No muerdas los piojos—yáj-lúcuuáj jlá. T; (lit. es, el piojo).
No muerdas los piojos delante de mí (al lado)—yaj-lucquén jla nuhuóyé. T; ojo al *lucquén* que concuerda con régimen.

MOSTRAR

Muéstrame la cara—puyen nuya atéi, T.
Muéstralo—puyéc-nú, T.
A ver muéstrame—hual-lécque puyec nuya, T.

MOVER

No te muevas—yájtátzin, yajta-zin, T.

NADAR

Nada tú—ec-lín, T.
No se nadar—nu-i-hacni-tde nu ti-lin, T.
Naden—ec-lin-en, T.
No sabemos nadar—nuihacni -quien-tde ti-lin, T.
¿Sabes nadar?—¿hal-ha-nej lactí -lín? T.
No sé—nui-ha nyégthe, T,
Aprende pues—óm-la-hanéj, T.

NOMBRAR

Nómbralo—huucléya, uocléya, T.
Vamos á nombrar al Cacique—inená íc-la canniáta, T.
Vamos á nombrar los Caciques—ináhûûl c-léyí-sa canniatéi, T.

OLVIDAR

Olvide—a-hoê set let-téj. Ver: **Agarrar**.

OSCURECER

Esta noche está muy oscura—hunát-tzina ic-quiá-laj-quió, T.

PAGAR

Trae te pagaré—miei na-aitzilá, T.

PARAR

Parate en el P.—e-hinlá F. T.
Párate—casít, T. (*t.* breve).
Párate de andar—casít áyij, *ó* casit-hayíj, T.
Te has de parar—tái-láin-ló.
Parate á pelear—cásita-in-ló oc -léi-quiá.

PARTIR

Partí (divide) la carne—quietzaj (palo, carne, tierra, etc.)

PASAR

Pasó el patrón—taj-yomanej niyát, T.
¿Quién pasa?—¿atd-toj-pá? T.
Pasan los soldados—soldados -icquién, T.
¿Quién pasó?—atdtój yicpá, T.
Han pasado los soldados, es decir, soldados han sido—soldao -sétzu, T.
Los soldados han pasado por ahí y han pasado (seguido adelante)—soldáos tiojquié toj'hi tojióma, T.

PASEAR

Pedro pasea con el Comandante—Peilo this-sí-cay j-loyá Comandante, T.

PEDIR

Pídame al Capitán cuando el vapor se vaya para abajo—al-lac núya Cap. quiá vapol yopil ca abacuyí, T.
Me vas á pedir cuando el vapor se vaya para abajo—ac-la núyei quiá vapol yopil cá hi-quió, T.

PEGAR

Están pegando á los muchados—ya-cu-i inotzass.
Péguele—aj *vel* ahj.
Pégale—phojlin, T.

PEINAR

Peinate la cabeza—tzétan étecque, T.

PELEAR

Hemos peleado con el tigre, hemos dejado la huella no más—nut-toc-lévecque ayój, yomét nuhuétess hotc'tá-zu. (Quiere decir que dejaron pisado el pasto y campo donde han peleado para mostrar lo reñido). Ver: **Matar, Frases, Y despues** etc.
Los perros están peleando—assen (?): cinot toj lilonas-sen.
Le digo, vamos á pelear, pero no se vaya disparando—nuyucque hú-ua natoc léi, yáj né-lá hal-lú-'ho, T.
Vamos á pelear—hú-ua na-toc-léi.
Paremonos á pelear—na-táin-tóh na-toc-léiéje.
Parate á pelear—cásitá oc-léi
Te has de parar á peléar—cásitá -inlo oc-léi-quía (*ó* jiá).
Hemos peleado—nu-lí-lo-nén.
De repente sale disparando—ni jain-ná-táj hin-néû hal-lú-'ho, T.
No dispare, parémonos á pelear—yajné hal-lú-'ho na-táin lóh na-toc léiéjé, T.
Vds. también no disparen—'hóté amil yac-niúc-cue hal-lu-'ho, T.

PENSAR

Estoy pensando—nunticquionc -lin, T.
Si aquí estoy, y no pensaba que habías de venir—eeh nui-caná, nam ti-hí amquie.

PERDER

Perder—tá-tói.
Perdí, he perdido—tá-tói.
Perdiste—naj-toj to-tói.
¿Cuándo la perdiste?—¿cthe naj -hoté toj tó-tói?
La perdí ayer—tatói icuála naj -tzó, T.

PESCAR (Antes, Despues)

Ahora voy á pescar, despues voy á comer—nuquiiel-lá yacsét nutdécquiil-lá ni lé-vécque, T.
Antes quiero comer, después iré á la Colonia—oittáj nutdecquie áyj nui'hóhitá Colonias quial -nil-leyéj, T. **(cuando ya dejo).**
Yo quiero pescar—nojlam ait-táj nuttdéûcue yacsét, T.
Yo quiero pescar sin red—nojlam ait-táj nutuuc-nhii ta laj nu-huuta, T.
Yo quiero pescar sin anzuelo—nojlam ait-táj nuyécnije uáj nam *honoya* (?) timécque, T.
Quiero pescar con la red—nui honniya ut-tannáj yacsét, T.
Quiero pescar con el anzuelo—nuihonnij timécque, T.
Pescad con la red—miya yacsét, *ó*, hun-ná hut-tanáj, T.
Pesquen con la red—huuocjién hon-nát hut-tanaj, T.; también huuc-hojién etc. T.
Pesquen con el anzuelo—hunnát timécque, T.
Hoy he pescado mucho—icuála nénna nilonèn yacsétes *ó* yácset nitócque, T.
He pescado—nu-huuc-cu-i.
Hoy he pescado mucho y no he agarrado nada—icuála nénna *nucquia* yacset namlóni tdat; *ó*, no-huuc-cui nam lóni tdat yac-sét, T.
Vamos á pescar—aquiinat théûc--cue yac-set, T.
Andate á pescar—éûc-cue yac--sét, T.
Pesquen—uôc-cú-hién amil, T; huuc-ho-jien.
Pesca—uôc-cói, uuc-coi-am, T.

PICAR

Arañita chica me ha picado—quiu-hút los-sáj uíc-cuájnú, T.
Arañita chica pica—quiú-hút los-sáj iuc-cu-uaj T.

PITAR

¿Quieres pitar—aitáj lo-guu-hi tzeccua, T.
No quiero pitar—ni-guuhitdé tzecua, T.
Pita—huutzé-cua, T.
Pitad—huutzé huéya, T.

PODER

No puedo—tzá-canig-tde, T.
Porque no puedo—hoptoj namsa-canéj.
No puedo romperlo—nihácanigtde ni-noc-hóss.
No puedo cerrarla (la puerta)—sacanigde ni-pbú-hi, T.
No puedo abrirla—ni-sacanig-tdé ni-guum, T.
Pude—sa-canije.

PONER

Pon el asado—phô a-pú-cue, T.
Asad el pescado—phô yácsét, T.
Poned el pescado al fuego—ti-'hi yacsét itój, T.
Puse—ni-ti'ze na'ji.
Pon los pescados al fuego—tihí yacsét-téss-sé itój, T.
Pon un pájaro al fuego—ti'hi á-huentié itój, T.
Pon los pájaros al fuego—ti'hi á-huentiéi itój, T.
Pon dos pájaros al fuego—ti'hi á-huentiéi hotejoasí itoj, T.
Pon dos pescados al fuego—ti'hi yacsetéss hotejoasi itój, T.
Ponte las medias—os-sicquie ac-coh-lo bhutéss, T.
Ponte el calzado—a-sicquie anis-sój-héss, T.
Pusiste—el-ti'je, la ti'je.
¿Dónde pusiste el sombrero?—dténel-tije guúcná, T.
Lo puse dentro del baul—nitíje na'hi *imañeji* (ropero) nuco'hi (ropero mio); T.
La puse afuera—ni-tije náj ajlú. T.
¿Dónde pusiste la escopeta?—td *ó* dténnáj lati'je lœtzequiáj locás nitócque (de muchos tiros y de dos) hote-joasí) T.
El sol se pone—(«dentra») icualá iiëi, T.
La luna se pone—iguelá iiêi (iocœui) T.

PRENDER

Voy á prendar mi cigarro—Nihuenquié nutzéc-cue, T.
Prende la vela—guuén *ó* huuén uelá. T.
Prende fuego—loc-ní, *vel* lójni itój, T.

PUÑALEAR

Mulato ha puñaleado á Faustino—M. ìtzónú F. T.

QUEDAR

¿Quedó contenta tu mujer?—yáj atcquiecuá lahcaquii i-si? T.
Se quedó contenta—heej laca-quii isi, T.
Ahora he quedado á mano de mi madre—la-'há 'hijinu-c-hú T. Cuento del Tigre, Ver: Matar—«Y después».
Has quedado contenta?—yaj necquiá aisclin.
Sí, he quedado contento—eeh, nucaquii sí.
No he quedado contento—nucáquii sihitde.
Adios teniente tú vas al Puerto, yo quedo sólo en la Colonia—ámëj-ná (*ó* amá jéc-ná) T. môh opil Hueltiéi tsiláca nojlam toj nui'hœa Colonia. núhuó te'hoji, T.
Quédate hombre—ec-hámmej, T.
Vd. quédese, los otros vayan—ec-hám-mej tziláj-a áínnój ní-néccque, T.

QUEMAR

Hoy el sol quema mucho—icualaména nicquiayiiúcue, T.
Campo ¿quien quemó el campo?—ajlun: adhéj güenécque?
El armado (pescado) está quemado—Castác iu-ho, T.

QUERER

Yo te quiero si quieres (que te

quiera); (la pregunta—yo te quiero ¿me quieres tú?)-nahai-hemin--halguuii, T.
¿Es cierto me querrás siempre?—amato ¿tojlo hemen no.
¿Quién será esita que lo quiero?—totuaj paicquiena nui hémnin, T.
¿Quién será esito lindo que lo quiero?atdé hilá tojuaj pèicquiena tsilatáj.
No, (quiero) porque debo esperar á fulano—nucquié-mic-lin-tdé, obtój nu-tayá icnú, T.
No, (quiero) porque debo salir «para» mi casa—ut supra, obtój nui hun lác nuhuetéi pbiye, T.
No te quiero—na-aihémnitdè, T.
¿Quieres casarte conmigo?—atquié nú-i-ammej? T.
No quiero—ní-guuhí-tdé, y mol-té, T.
¿Porqué—atdeiecquè.
No quiero que juegues con las chinas—nu-hé-nó hiyigtde lócjuihien atzinai, T.
Yo la quiero la hija menos la vieja—nuihemin j'lósse nuihemini tdé hicquiot, T.
¿Quieres conchavarte?—aitajut tác milin, T.
¿Quieres ir á sacar agua—yajaitáj la-tac muhu inót.
No quiero ir—nú-cquiitde, T.
No quiero saltar—notioji iphomtde.
Si quieres avísame (contesta)—quiel-guui ahuel-nú'ho, T.
¿Que quieres?—atthep lác-necquiéi T.
Quiero carne y caña—nutheinló quiuhuasétáj inotáj.
¿Que quieres?—adép lanecquiei—¿qué andas queriendo? T.
Quiero entrar—aitáj nui'hu'hi cué hepp.
No quiero sembrar—no-teûccquiehi-tdé.
No quiero entrar—núi huhi tdé c-cui hépp.
Quiero entrar—ait-táj nuihu-hí c-cui hépp.
¿Quieres bañarte?—ait-táj lonahii.
«No conversando» no quiero conversar, no converso—nutanjitde, notan hniitde, nu-tanhñii-igtdé.
Quiero salir—aitaj nicnchipó, T.
Quiero sentarme—aitaj núpo-'hypo, T.
¿Quieres venir conmigo?—yeáj aitáj *hlanéi*—quienuc-cue. T. *hlanéc.*
No, no quiero—nuc-quiitdé ¡ámquie. T.
¿Porqué?—attdéiecque. T.
Porque estoy cansado—nuielclin, *vel*, nuielc-lín. T.
¿Lo quieres á Pedro?—hal-hémin Péigro?
No lo quiero—noihem-ni-tdé, T.
Lo quiero—nóihemín. T.
¿«Quieres» conversar en Toba?—hoit-táj lo-gun'hi uanc-loi clái'*hiila* (*niila*). T.
¿Quieres dormir conmigo?—ait-táj lomóhi núycque. T.

QUITAR (Ver: Gustar)

Quitá deme campo para pasar—einjló huun-nu-nóyiquia. T. (lit. á un lado deme yo vaya modo).

RECOGER

Recoger algarroba—tóhcque hûái.
Recoja algarroba—oc-cue hûái. T.

REFUSILAR

Está refusilando, me hace que va á llover—péj-lái yût-lép elát igunquió. T.

REIR

Aquella china ríe—atziná litzé this-quiéi. T.

RESPIRAR

Respira todavía—camaj tiál. T.
No respira más—inemtial (t—th) T.

RESPLANDECER

Ver: **Brillar.**

RETAR

El Comandante me ha retado—C. i-ié-t nuya. T.
El Comandante retó á Pedro—C. i-ietá Peiló. T.
El Comandante retó á los soldados—C. i-ieta-hen soldados. T.
El Comandante te retó—C. i-iétáma. T.

El Comandante es retó—C. i-iét ama-hén. T.

ROBAR

P. te ha robado el caballo—P. iscát aj-ló yelatáj. T.
P. te está robando tus ovejas—P. iscatén ác-loi tzonatáss. T.
P. te robó dos caballos—P. iscat ác-lói yélatáss hote jóasi. T.

ROMPER

Rompe aquel palo—nac-hós hac-ló látzi. T.
Rompe este palo—nac-hós han-loná. T.
Rompe ese palo—nac-hós han-lo lani. T.
No puedo romperlo—ni-tsáca-nigtde ni-noc-hóss. T.
Porque es «duro» demasiado—hoptoj *tdéhn* nisaca-nigtdé nóc-hos. T.

SABER

¿Sabes hablar Indio? — hál-hanéj 'lot-ta-'hui. T.
No sé—nuiiha-niegthe. T.
Sabes coser—hal 'hanej lat-ti-tzécan. T.
No sé coser—nuija nigde nutzécan. T.
P. no sabe andar á caballo—P. yacanigtde ip-pé yelatáj.
¿Sabes su nombre?—hal-la-nej-éi. T.
¿Sabes su idioma?—hál-l-hanék lacniil. T.
¿Sabes hablar como ellos?—yajlahanéj tojiómuitó. T.
No sé hablar como Vd.—nulanhii hoté hi tde amhii. T.

SACAR

¿Quieres ir á sacar agua?—yájaitáj la-tac-mu-'hu inot. T.
No quiero ir—nu-cquíi-tde. T.
Y de ahí «le he sacado» el cuero—ni-léyécque uitd ni-hlani tdój. T. Ver: **Hacer. Lo he hecho.**
¿De dónde sacaste esta vela?—dtel-tol-ti uéla. T.
De la casa de Roldan—nitoltanáj Roldan huet.

SALIR

No, porque debo salir para mi casa—nuc obtoj nui hunlac nu huétéi pbiye.
¿Porqué debes salir de tu casa?—atdéyéj yác-lec yá tchui-ia hahuét? T.
Sale del Fuerte—mocquiúya. F. T.
¿Cuándo (?) saliste de la tolderia?—atlejque: tojnatá.
No como aquel caballo cuando le sacan el freno que sale disparando—hote-hi-tde yelataj máji tilac-ni luc-hái ta inœ-ha-lu-ho. T.
Quiero salir—aitáj nícne'hi-phó.

SALTAR

No quiero saltar—notioji ip-homtde. T.
Pego un salto encima de un palo—tiója-pé há-ló (han-ló). T.
De repente pega el salto contra mí—ni-yáin-natá tecquiái nuyéi. T.
Salta—ti-yój-pho. T.

SANAR

¿Ha ó has sanado?—acquiés?

SEMBRAR

No quiero sembrar—noteûc-cquiehi-tdé. T.
¿Porqué?—atdéyej ó attéyej. T.
Porque no puedo—hoptoj nam sacanéj. T.

SENTAR

Sentáte—aquie po-pho.
Sentarse — Ver: **Traigame**, etc. **Frases.**
Sentáte—póphó, po-pó y pa-pá. T.
Quiero sentarme—aitáj nûpo-'hypo. T.

SENTIR

Yo lo siento también pero que le vamos á hacer—núya uitd nuyóyin dtat.

SEPULTAR

Sepultado—taj-hón-chquiuya. T.
El Capitán ha sepultado á Faustino—C. taj-hón-shquiuya. F. T.

SER

Nosotros somos soldados—icnamil ná soldados. T.
Aquel es soldado—tojline soldado. T.
Vosotros sois soldados—amil á soldaos. T.
Aquellos son soldados—tójéss tzù soldaos T.
Los Tobas han sido siempre malos—Uanc-loi j-lám-mej tdhát tojhuitzáj. T.
Los Indios ahora son amigos—Indios necquié jlàhuuhéi. T.
¿De ahi es—lél-léi. T.
Yo soy soldado—nujlam soldado T.; nu *vel* **no soldado.**
Vos sois soldado—á soldao am. T.
Es poco—catzi huiáj váya. T.
¿Es vivo?—hi-loi. *ó* hin-lói. T.
Este caballo es muy guapo fortacho, no le saco el apero; también es mansito, que está quieto—yelataj já chómta jca-jai dtcenquié nilanih-'hitde la hu-uet yib tacsinitdé tac-h-tzin. T.
Este tabaco es para granadero, aquel es para mí, ese para tí—yiuccuássá Gr.; lotzéi 'nei; yiuccuáss nuctzóejlam. tziláj tójtzi atzóec am. T.
Vos sois donosa—áitzilatá. T.
Este es mi hijo—nujlóss tója. T.
Yo soy soldado—nujlam soldado.
Vos sois soldado—soldao am.
¿Sois linda vos?—¿yaj ai tzilatáj?
Si, estoy linda, y vos?—éeh nitzilatáj tdeui am? T.
También estoy lindo—'hoté nitzilatáj. T.
Los Tobas han sido siempre malos—Uancloi jlámmeje tdhát tój huitzáj.
Son visitas mias—nù-cá tzi-cáss.
Aquel perro es casi blanco—ac'nój a-li-né aitáj i-pél-ji. T.
¿Cuantas palabras son?—tdé-hóte anahiii. T.
Son dos palabras—anahii hotetoasi. T.
Son visitas mias—nùcá tzi-cáss. T.
Vds. son mis amigos—amil necquii na a huuchéi. T.
Este es Capitán—tóji Capitan. T.
«Solo aquel es Capitán» con el teniente—tzíllacque tojtzú Capitan c-lo-yá Teniente. T.
Solo aquellos son soldados—tzíláca tojéss tzú toj soldaos. T.
Esta palma es alta—cué-tzéj-cúá pit-táj. T.
Estas palmas son altas—cué-tzéj-cuá at-tùss quii-pho. T.
Aquella palma es alta—cuétzéj-licné a-tuss quiu-pho. T.
¿Cuánto es ancho el río?—dthé-'hoté toj-quii-tzapho Teujtaj? (Río Bermejo). T.
¿Cuánto está lejos la ranchería?—thé'hoté lo'huai hép-pei, yaj nitùeuéi. T.
¿Cuánto es distante la ranchería?—thé'hoté lo-'huoi hép-pei.
No está léjos—yaj nitùcuéi. T.
No está léjos, vamos á llegar—a-tù-cue-yieigtde iomlá. T.
Granadero es cacique general—Quiátzutáj (Vilelon) tojcanniat tizán. T.
Son cobardes—nu-aintzés-saje.

SOPLAR

Hoy sopla mucho viento—icualanéna in-huócque ic-cquie. T. (néna—ná).
Hoy sopla más viento que ayer—icualanéna in-huocque yic-quie icualanaji inhuotc i'hiquiectde. T.
Ayer sopló mucho viento—icualanáji inhuócc yaqu-ic-quié. T; *vel* inhuoccuetáj; *ó*, icuálanajtzú inhuócc yacuitquie hùnát. T.

TAPAR *(vel* **Cerrar)**

TARDAR

M. está tardando—M. to-tói. T.
No tardar—yaj-ta-tói-lá. T.
M. ha tardado mucho—M. to-tói paj-cquié **(mucho tiempo)**. T.
Si tardas—quiá a-tói.

TEJER

El tejido está hecho—toyùcque huac-gál. T.
Tejed—caclit potzin. T.

TEMER

Aquella china tiene miedo—atzí-

ná n-huuai *(vel* nu-uái) netzí, T.
Aquella china tiene miedo de su marido—nu-huuaya lacquiecua, T.
Los Tobas tienen miedo de los Cristianos—Uuanc-loi nuhuuáya Ciguéele, T.

TENER

Este cuero no tiene pelo—itzón tdój loguulé i'hi 'hitde, T.
Tengo piojos en la cabeza—jlá 'hi'hi nûc-lé-técque, T.
No tiene nada «adentro la barriga»—láj-imaquia'hi nu-tzhé, T.
No tiene mujer—laj nuchecuóia (tal vez *cuohta*).
Tengo sed—ni-quiim, T.
No le tengo asco—nam bonija; **que me abrazara**—ce-lé-ctié-no, T.
Tengo hambre—nûn-quiéyé, T.
Le tengo asco—bonija, bonija, T.
¿Tienes hijos vos?—*há* osi'ji-ji, *ó* hi hi: indica posesión, tener. T.
No tengo—uénitdé, T.
«¿Tenés» mujer vos?--hác-quiécua *iji*, ihi? T.
«¿Tenés» marido vos?—hácquiécua, T.
Tengo tres hijos y dos hijas—nûléss lajticuaiell *tójimul* (hombre) guuitd atzináí hotejoasí, T.
¿Tienes hijos? cuántos?—aless: quiéjoté aless.
¿Tienes hambre?—aquieyé?
¿Hay vacas en la toldería?—aquiuase'áj hije?
Tener mucho tranco—Ver: **Tranquear**.
Está con las reglas—uuyiss hiyej, T.
Estás con las reglas—hauuyiss i-amej, T.
Sí estoy—éh i-núyij, T.
No estoy—uuiss i-hitdé nuyij, T.
Este cuero no tiene pelo—itzón tdój loguulé i-hi-hitdé, T.
Tengo calor—quieûj ilón-nú.

TIRAR (**Arrastrar**)

Un barril lo tiran acarreando agua—ualin titlín-tot nánij inot, T.

TOCAR (**de música**)

Aquel está tocando—toj litzé taccá-hutzén, T.
Aquellos están tocando—to'jess alitzé yac-quié péh la-pe-miss, T.
Toca—hén-quié, T.
Toquen—hén-quié-hén, T.
Toquemos—huac-inenhe-quién, T.

TOCAR

No me toques—yactacquii núya, T.
No toques ese libro—yactacquiuma toiyi-aicnécque, T.
Tócame—quium-nuya, T.
Tócalo—quiu-ma, T.
A ver te voy á tocar los pechitos, y si me querés te has de dejar tocar—'hu-ual-léc nut-cquiása há-ta-téi, cquial-'hémennû uitd la-huai-ni-lá nuya, T.
No te voy á dejar tocar porque tiene dueño—ni-huái-ni-tde áma lé-huœc 'hi-hi, T.
Aunque tenga dueño no importa—tej-toj le-huœc 'hi-hi tá le-cquiój, T.
Te voy á dejar ¿y Vd. no tiene dueño?--ni-huái-nil-a-ma tá tdeui am laj au-uéc-cua, T.
No tengo quien me diga, yo te hablo porque soy sólo, y si no fuera sólo no te hablaría—ni-hué-ni-tde tuc-iú-cu-é no-ta 'hu-i áma ob-toj nu-hoté-ho-hi (jo-hi) e-hip né-cquiá nam-hote-jo-hi nam tau'hí áma, T.

TRABAJAR

Trabaja con el hacha—nui-hónát húsan, T.
Trabaja con su hijo--ta-tainló jlóss--toj tœcquiém lin, T.
¿Para quién trabaja Pedro?—Peiló atdep la-tacmupc-lin, T.
Para don Natalio—N. quioémet, T.
¿Con qué trabaja Pedro?—Peiló *atdep la-hóna* acquiémet, T.
Trabajad: ligero—acquiémet, quelit.
¿Con quién trabaja Pablo?—Pailó atdep lóya toj lota-cquiem-lin, T.
Vamos á trabajar—ináquiéma uitó *vel* huuitó, T.
Trabaja ligero hombre—caelit quiemlín, T.

Trabajad ligero muchachos—acquél-lit huitóh. T.

TRAER

Trae te pagaré—miei no-aitzilá.
Traigame algo para sentarme encima—atquiój imácu-a pbiye nu-pho-pho *a-pé*, T.
Trae aquí—atquiój-hum caná. T.
Traigame fuego (?)—achoj huochecua.
Trae ese sombrero—acchquiój guucnálanf. T.
Déme mi sombrero—atzé nucahuuna *vel* cahuuna, T.

TRANQUEAR

Pedro tiene mucho tranco—P. lanoñhióí uitóc, T.

TRENZAR

Está trenzando sobre la pierna el chaguar—ipotzin aphé lecquié oietzáj, T.

VALER

¿Cuánto vale?—tdé 'hote la'já?
Vale dos reales—la'já lus tális. T. (scalis)

VAMOS Ver IR

VENDER

Véndame pan—tza-aj pan niquinoj, T.
¿Cuánto?—tde-'hote? T
Todo—lac cúno. T.
Vendame pan—huen-náj nuho pan niquinój. T.
Véndame pan—huen-náj nuho pan.

VENIR

¿De dónde vienes?—tde, *ó* tél-tól-ei (tdel-tol-lei) ¿T. tthel-tól-li. tthól-pá.
¿De dónde vas á venir?—tdé-lá-tocli? T.
Vengo del Fuerte—nu tléi Fuelte, *ó*, nu-tol-ei. F. nutol Fuelt-ei. T.
He vuelto para acá vengo del Fuerte—nu-tpil ajlù-ho, nut-lei, *vel*. nutolca Fuelt-véi. T.
Pedro viene de la Colonia—P. tolléi Colonias. tol—lei. T.
Vendrá—nom-lá.
¿Vinieron?—uéc-nín nom-mén?
Venid—atquié, atchinoycque; achucaná (*para acá*). aj-l-hé.
Venga al otro lado—ac-huho clip-él-la, T.
¿Porqué no viniste ayer?—atdeyéj yacnom-iáya hualanáp (ji?) *Plural* yacnomiayatén.
Vengo de arriba—nutullca póméi.
Vengo de abajo—nutolca inquiómi, nutol-ca icquiomi.
Si aquí estoy, y no pensaba que habías de venir—eeh nuicaná, nam ti-hí ámquie.
¿Quieres venir con nosotros?—aitáj loneicquii nuc-cuéhén, T.
¿Quieres venir conmigo?— aitaj loneicquii *nuccue*.
Granadero viene alguna vez á la Colonia—Gr. nicquiéj *pho mil*-lá nom Colonias, T.
Ha de venir dentro de un rato—tapil-la-páj, T.
Volvieron los soldados?— uécnín nócmén *ó* nommen S. T.
Si vienes ahí hemos de ver—inátzanac nóm. T; **Vamos á cantar, vamos á acordar cuando éramos chicos**—inatcquiuiuias tdát ui-tó inan'icquiinec tojaj inacai nu-la-sa, T.
¿Porqué no viniste ayer?—atdeyéj yacnom iáya hualanáji, T.
¿Porqué no viniste ayer?—atdeyéj yaj nom iáya-hèn hualanaji, T.
Vengo de arriba—nu-tul-lca poméi. T.
Vengo de abajo—nu-tul-lca inquiomi *ó* icquiomi. T.
Venga—acquii tocuéley. T.
Viene el Comandante — Comandante nom. T.
Recien va á venir—nejquiat nomlá (ahora vendrá). T.
¿Quién viene?—atdej, *vel*, atdhéj toinom? T.
¿Quién ha venido?—hatné tojnom? T.
El Comandante ya ha venido?—Comandante nom-mé. T.
Hoy ha venido el Comandante—icuálánén-ná Comandante nómmé. T.
Mañana vendrá el Comandante—Comandante nomlá icuala hpiye (pbiye). T.

Mañana vendrá Mulato con su hijo y con su mujer—Mulató nomlá hpíye icuála hlói hil-la lachécua uitd («mejor, más claro c-loyá») loss. T.
Venite conmigo—atquié nuycque. T.
¿De dónde vienes?—theltól-li?
Vengo de la Banda—nutólcá hlipéc-li. T.
¿De dónde venís vosotros tan muchos?—tthel-pa lactol-liquié ya tatantocquia. T.
Venimos de la Colonia—nu-tol-ca Coloniaséi.
¿De dónde venís?—tthél-pa lac-tol--li-quié?
Aunque vengan—tej-lácque nom.

VER

¿Lo has visto al Comandante?—hal-huéné Comandante. T.
Lo he visto—ech, ni-huen-náje. T.
No lo he visto—ní huen-nitdénaii. T.
¿Vas á verlo?—hal-huén-c-lá? T.
Ver, ¿has visto á los Tobas?—alo-guen Uanclói?
¿No ves aquel árbol?—hal-huéni hal-ló lin-ne? T.
Lo veo—ni-huéni ál-ló lic-ne. T.
No lo veo—ni-hué ni yitde. T.

VISITAR

El C. visitó á Pedro—Comandante tdis-sicjáy Pedro td=th. T.
El Comandante visita todos los días—*Comandante tdes-sicjaypej* ihuálas. P. T.
El Comandante visita siempre á Pedro—Comandante tdis-sicjaipéj P. T.
El Comandante visitó á Granadero—Comandante tdis-sicjay Granadero. T.

VIVIR

¿Está vivo?—hi-loi, hiu-loi. T.
Vive—ilói. T.
¿Adónde vive Pedro?—tdel-lué 'hi-'je P.? T.
Vive en frente de la Iglesia (derecha)—hi'je tójto-huocotchí tatá inló. T.

VOLAR

Que lindo aquel pájaro que vuela—ahuentié yá tzilatá toj hui-ió. T.
El picaflor vuela muy ligero («es más ligero cuando vuela»)—tzóénaj e-hom ilo-juél toj hui-ió. T.
Oh! se ha volado la paloma—hêi! ucquuinataj hui-ió. T.
Oh! se han volado todos los pájaros—hei! huentiéi netdat huiiohen nujzi (i. e. porque han estado, etc.)
Mira aquel pájaro que vuela—ya-hin huentié toj huiyó. T.
¿Qué aves son las que vuelan?—atdé huentié tój hui-ió. T.
Oh! como vuelan ligero—áyia yib lo-cu-él toj huió. T.

VOLCAR

Vuelca agua en el mate—tzojniu inót huutzotáj éss. T.

VOLVER

He vuelto para acá ó vengo del Puerto—nutpil ajlûho, nut-léi *vel.* nú-tol-léi, Fuelte, *vel*, nutolca Fueltyéi.
Voy á volver—no-tpinlá.
Vuelvo del Teuco—nutolca teuccue nutólléi Teuco. T.
Volveré dentro de un rato—notpinlapáj. T.
La china volverá dentro de un rato—atzina pinla pbiya páj. T.
Las chinas volverán dentro de un rato—atzinái tapinlá pbiye páj. T.
Vuélvete á la Banda—op-léi c-lipél. T.
El hermano varón—qui-hiél (grande) yuc—le dice—yac-taj hulin, de vicio lloras, no llores, *hottuc tapini*—no ha de volver.
Tal vez el vapor volverá—élát Vapol tapilcquio T.
Volvéte de mañana—tapi-lá-inatáje. T.
Volvéte de mañanita—tapi-lá inemtáje. T.
Volvéte por la tarde—tapi-lá húnáje. T.
Volvéte por la noche—tapi-la hunatzí. T.
Volvió el Comandante—atpilé Comandante?
No volvió—tá-pini-thé. T.

¿Volvieron los soldados?—iáctapil kuié'hénné soldaos? T.
Sí vuelvo—quié nótpil-l.
He vuelto—no-tpiní.
No volvieron — tapiní quiihénte soldaos. T.
Volvieron—tapilquiéhené. T.
Para que vuelvan—op-quilá tapíl.
Cuando se vuelva—quiol-tapil-quio (cuando vuelva para abajo.)

DIÁLOGOS Y RELACIONES

EL BRUJO

1 Estaban bailando los Indios (gente) de repente le oigo un cristiano que viene cantando por el camino.

1 Tac-cátin ucquii nutquiahun lintá cihuéle paneccquie no yihe (ó yije) tic jquiócjlin.

2 Ha llegado ande estaba la India-da, se paró, los está reparando los Indios que estaban bailando.

2 Nomemuh toj cquii hije táccasíta lloc-cui iucquii tojtachatin (ta khatin).

3 De repente sale el médico, no le ha gustado lo que lo reparan.

3 Niyaicná iyagu-é ta cno-em-nacquie toj-tí-loc-cui.

4 El médico llama al Dios, dice, fléchalo, ese hombre le mostramos «lo que poco valimos nosotros».

4 Niyaicnatá thoc-ná ahót yoc-hua tiojo himilani yap mat acmia na-nojlát,

5 El Dios dice — sí, está bueno (quiero).

5 A-hót yuc-ho eéh ni-guui.

6 De repente (lo veo que) se cae de encima del caballo.

6 Niainneitá tol-l-phótol pielatáj.

7 De repente el médico se tapa.

7 Niainná iagu-e-ta hip-hol-l-tapé (hi-po-la-ta-pé).

8 Repente le oigo debajo què está sonando un ruidito como si le habían quebrado un palo, flecha había sido.

8 Nuchquiahuígatá imacpá temcquiùhi hoteh yaalocmaj tino ohóss iucuajtzhoj: lútéc pbatáte.

9 Los llamo á los otros, les digo vayan á verlo.

9 Nutona inhioj nuyoc muiyáicnéi.

10 Repente le sigo, uno dice, está muerto.

10 Nucquiahunjlin ta el-l pa yuc yl.

11 El Dios lo flechó, porque no ha creído que era Dios, lo reparó al Dios.

11 *Ahot* tiójo obtoj yeccatchguia ahot, iloc-cui ahot.

12 Reparo.

12 Loccui.

13 Gente de Pedro,

13 Pelo-ca uicquii.

RELACIÓN DE LO QUE HIZO UNA COMISIÓN DE PELEA; TAJO

(Nicuutaj—Comisión)

1 Te lo voy á contar lo que hemos vuelto (lo que nos pasó, etc.)	1 Núyomíl-lecque toj 'háj iat-pil.
2 Repente le oigo atrás, dicen tus compañeros, los est n matando de atrás del camino.	2 'Alu'ho, nuquiámcue nunoyjtá tójpá, yûc aiñoje tatzi tilonihén lájnóyije.
3 Y de allí les digo: párense.	3 Uuitd nuyuc: casit.
4 ¿Cómo habrá estado, *yo hubiese* querido hallarme.	4 Epp, mát pán—nól-lá entajtad nunhuénéjque.
5 Lo que no he visto *cuando se han ido*, yo hubiese ido.	5 Hóp péjia toj-nam huénquie *tójnáje icquiên nncquiic* né.
6 Hubieses visto, hemos peleado, nos hemos metido á lanza, y *después* los mataron muchos.	6 Tétquiél uénéjtá nu-lil-lonén nûl-la-quiumquie; *h uajaltá* tilonen nitóccue.
7 *A uno le sacaron* la cabellera;	7 *El tilácni* letéj-doj; (toj=tdoj—*cuero*).
8 A uno le sacaron las manos;	8 Yib él *tilanquié* técuéiai.
9 A otro le cortaron las manos;	9 Yibél toyísten tecuéyei.
10 A otro le sacaron la «macana» (miembro);	10 Yibel tilacní jlú.
11 A otro le sacaron las bolas;	11 Yibel tilacni quióniss.
12 A una china le sacaron la vulva;	12 Yibatzina tilacní los-sóè;
13 A Pedro el corazón;	13 Yib Peiló tilacní latud-dlé;
14 A muchos les cortaron la cabeza.	14 Nitóc-tój toyistén létéc;
15 A muchos les sacaron las cabezas.	15 Nitóc-toj tilanquie letéi.

CONVERSACIÓN DEL INDIO TAJO

1 El—¿Qué estás haciendo dentro del rancho? sal afuera te voy á conversar si quieres.	1 Atdepleyej cquiu-jui 'hépp húyéi (huyiei) ajlú nu ta'hui áméj quiá lguui (lhuui).
2 Si no queris avisáme.	2 Cquiá ca-huuyeyéi uuitd (uid) ahuél-nu'ho.
3 Ella—Bueno, espere ya voy me están viendo.	3 Hi, táhia ayíj, nuihucláma, tí-te-tzon nú.
4 El—Me voy á retirarme dentro de un rato, voy á volver por Vd. cuando se descuiden.	4 Nuyìc ayìc nujli tuntéi, nutpinlá àmac páj cquiá, itéc-ma-tén.
5 Ella—Bueno, váyase y vuelva dentro de un rato, recien vamos á salir para el monte.	5 Eh: mmóh tapinlá páj huid nécquiá n-cquié-ná, na-huyéi-lá ta'jú licné.

DIÁLOGO

1 Andate á poner linda.	1 Môh omai tzilatá. T.
2 Ahora si que estás linda.	2 Necquia ai sila-tá. T.
3 Andate.	3 Môh. T.
4 No sé.	4 Dtáyéc hdat. T.
5 Andate te voy á alcanzar.	5 Môh ayje naihuit-lá. T.
6 Te has de apurar, yo te voy á esperar.	6 Cquel-láj ha na hái nijhuil-linaj. T.
7 Si tardas mucho me voy á ir.	7 Náai nijú-hil-linthe quiá-átói. T.
8 No sé.	8 Dtáiéj that. T.

DIÁLOGO (TAJO)

1 Adios me voy para Buenos Aires.	1 Amej-ná nuyopil Buenos Aires.
2 He de volver dentro de dos años.	2 Not-pinlá c-lúp hotejoasí.
3 No te vas á casar, te voy á traer alguna cosita.	3 Yájtahuaiei-lá, niquioj-lá ámi imá ic-cuáss.
4 Te voy á traer sarcillo y pañuelo de taparse.	4 Ni-quioj-lá ámi, ta quiû-telei nuyíssiquiá étec-p'ut
5 Te voy á traer espejo también.	5 Nuyisiquiá apeyáj-'hi.
6 Te voy á traer sortija también, agujas é hilo.	6 Nuyísiquiá ahuéjû-hí, canûl-l c-loi 'hi-lá hilo.

DIÁLOGO

1 ¿Quieres que te abrace como te quiero?	1 Alteinló nûtzeicuél á-mej optój nai-hémen, T.
2 Dame alguna cosita voy á dormir contigo.	2 Huuicnú'ho imàyícque huuitd nimó'j-lá ámej. T.
3 Sí, te voy á dar.	3 Eéh, egüit nigüen-la-ámo. T.
4 Me has de engañar.	4 Lécuéi jlin-ni-nú: cuéi; *vel* güéi v huéi.
5 No te he de engañar.	5 Nai-huéi nil-lingtde. T.
6 ¿Tienes plata?	6 Hal-huén lecquiinat-thój. T
7 Si tengo.	7 Eh, ni-huen. T.
8 No tengo.	8 Huenitdé, *vel*, nam-uhuén. T.
9 Muéstrame.	9 Poyén núya. T.
10 Vaya voy contigo.	10 Móh nuíque ámquie. T.
11 Voy á dormir con Vd.	11 Ni-moj-lá ámejque. T.
12 De mañanita voy á volver.	12 Not-pin-lá ináj. T.
13 Vas á ir mañana.	13 Hal-lícquiin-lá quiicuála. T.
14 No voy á ir mañana.	14 Noc-quii-tdé quiicualá. T.

15. Bueno voy á volver á la tarde.
16 Has de venir con las otras compañeras á la tarde.
17 Mis compañeras van á dormir con las otras.
18 Solos nosotros (dice ella) vamos á dormir por «ahicito» (medio retirado); mañana que les de á ellas alguna cosa, para que vuelvan á la tarde, sino se van.
19 Adios, me voy.
20 Que te vaya bien. me voy.
21 Si no se va el vapor esta tarde voy á volver.
22 Te voy á echar menos si se va el vapor.
23 Lo he de apurar pá que se vuelva el vapor; hemos de dormir otra vez si vuelve.

15 Eh, nótpinlá qiuahun-na, *vel* hún-na, T.
16 Oyél-lá aiñoj quiél-tapil chahun ná. T.
17 Nuiñoj imó'jí quiena. T.
18 Tzil-jquelá iniániáss (*vel* inámil) tojinamuhuás quiel-latzú: ni-huénnúm-quiela lo-huéys (*vel* imayí-cuas *vel* imacuas) quiicuála (*vel* chicuála), oquilá tapilquiácuná. quiácque â-quia-hén. T.
19 Áméj-na nuyícque tdát.
20 *Ut supra.*
21 Quiác néc-quiá Vapol quía hunnáj notpinlá húnáj. T.
22 Noj-c-lítdha-lá ámej, quia Vapol yícque. T.
23 Cjaelit-c-liná Vapól quióltapil quió yíp námulá quiénótpil-l. T.

RELACIÓN — EL TIGRE — (TAJO)

1 El tigre ha comido una china, el marido la echó menos, y la hija también lloró por la madre (por ella) que le había comido el tigre.
2 Le dice el hermano mayor, de vicio lloras, no llores, no ha de volver; yo lo siento también, pero que le vamos á hacer.
3 Ayer el tigre *casi* me la comió á mi hermanita; pero lo he visto.
4 He agarrado el tigre, le he quitado mi hermana.
5 Lo he agarrado, le he prendido una puñalada.
6 Pego un salto encima de un palo.
7 De repente pega el salto contra mí.
8 Y lo he agarrado el cuchillo le he pegado otra puñalada.
9 Hemos peleado con el tigre, hemos dejado la huella no más. (Quiere decir que dejaron pisado el pasto y campo donde han peleado para mostrar lo reñido).

1 Aiyój teûc atziná lecquieccuá iguat yip loj-sé taj-hu-lin yoyen lo-cû tój ayój teûc.
2 Lecquilá tojasnáque qui-hiél yûc yac-táj-hu-lin, hot-tuc tápini nú. ya uitd nuyoyin dtát.
3 Ayiój *icnaje* (icualá náje) tecuuitaj nucquiinnó-cûá-tac-nii néniy-
4 Notquiœmma ayój nis-súyec-nuquiin-nó.
5. Notquióèma ni-tnó pójej lec-quiinaj.
6 Tiója-pé há-lo (han-ló).
7 Ni-yáin-natá tecquiái nuyél.
8. Yib notquiôéma lecquiinaj nótpojej.
9 Nut-toc-léyecque ayój, yomét nuhuétess hote-ta-zú.

10 Y después he muerto el tigre: yo había sido más valiente que el tigre.	10 Uac-jaltá nilon hom nicnú ya-pa ayioj.
11 Y de ahí le he *sacado* el cuero.	11 Ni-léyécque uitd ni-hlani tdój.
12 Lo he hecho coleto.	12 Nuiyen cjaiœcguiœ yá.
13 Ahora he quedado á mano de mi madre.	13 La-'há 'hijinu-c-hú.

Nota — Algunos podrán estrañar que se hayan admitido voces y frases en que resalta un naturalismo material á lo Zolá; no está de más, pues, advertir que el señor Pelleschi reproducía los pensamientos y expresiones de sus interlocutores Indios, para quienes todo esto era lo más natural del mundo: se apuntaba la palabra expontánea del Indígena, nó la sugestión del viajero «Cristiano»

Por otra parte, es bien sabido que el fonetismo de estos idiomas es de los más celosos, la interpolación de un sonido cualquiera podría falsear todos los demás, de suerte que no se tendría una reproducción fonética de la realidad, sino la hipótesis de un observador inteligente. Esto hubiese sido contrariar toda la índole de este concienzudo trabajo. Todo se deja como salió de la boca del Indio y como le sonó al señor Pelleschi, que lo oía y apuntaba. No se trataba de un salón del *High-Life* de Buenos Aires, sino del aduar de un Mataco-Mataguayo.

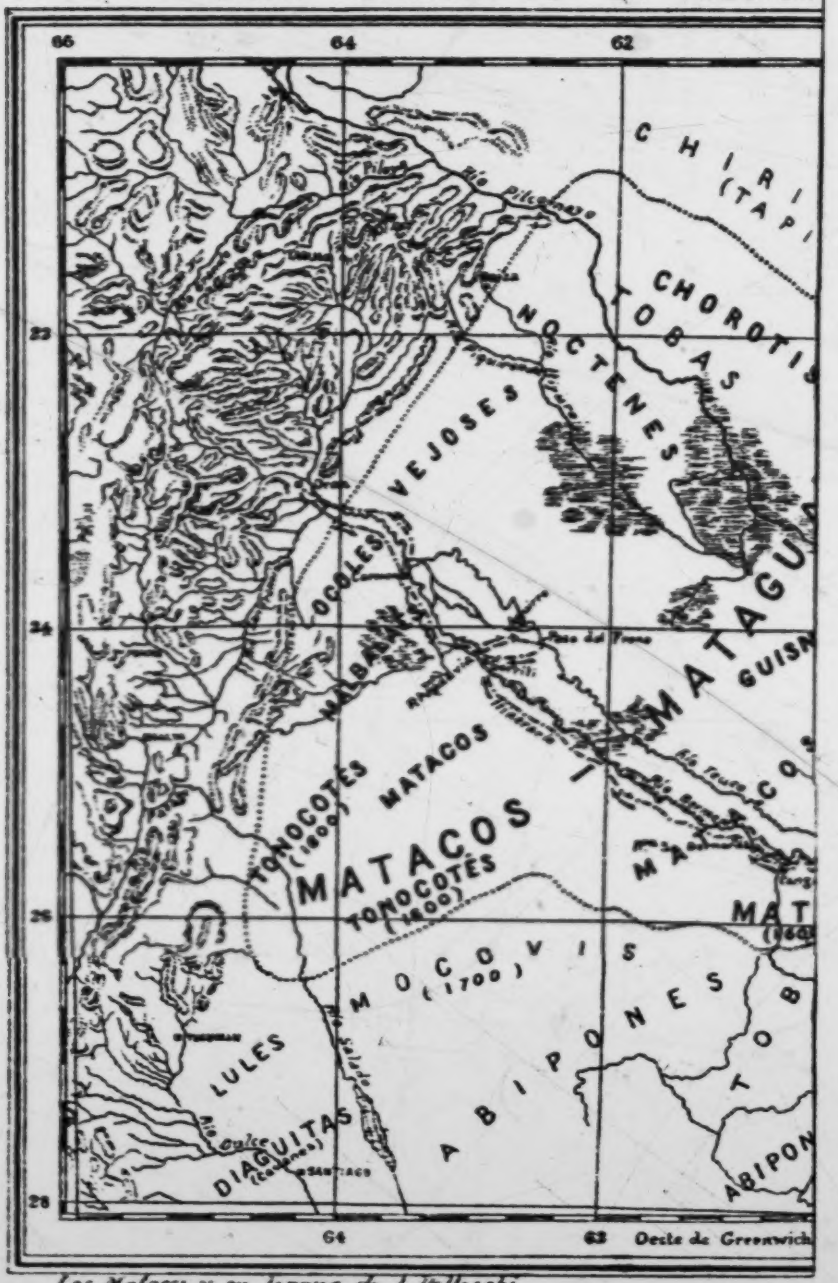
S. A. L. Q.

EXPLICACIONES DEL MAPA

1ª. Los nombres con tinta colorada corresponden á tribus Mataco-Mataguayas.

2ª. No deben confundirse estos Chulupís con los otros afines de los Vilelas.

MAPA ÉTNICO DE LA REGION



Los Mataco y su lengua, de J. Pelleschi.

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A REGIÓN MATACO - MATAGUAYA.

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SOCIETAS SCIENTIARUM FENNICA
COMMENTATIONES HUMANARUM LITTERARUM. IV. 1.

INDIAN TRIBES

OF THE

ARGENTINE AND BOLIVIAN CHACO

ETHNOLOGICAL STUDIES

BY

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Read January 18th 1932.

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PREFACE

000 *This book contains the ethnological material collected by me during my travels in the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco in 1911—1913, my first scientific expedition to South America. In publishing it, I wish to express my gratitude to the Argentine Government, who generously facilitated, in various ways, my journeys in that country, to Professor R. Lehmann-Nitsche of the Museum of La Plata, who helped me with good advices and introductions, to Messrs. Leach Brothers at Esperanza, Province of Jujuy in northern Argentine, whose grand hospitality I enjoyed during my stay at the sugar factories of Esperanza, and to Messrs. Staudt & C:o in Villa Montes, Bolivia, who rendered my many excellent services while I lived among the Bolivian Toba tribes.*

An insignificant proof of my gratitude to the Argentine Government is the small collection I brought from the Choroti and presented to the Ethnographic Museum of Buenos Aires on my return from the Chaco.

I also want to express my obligation to Mr. W. Hansson, Stockholm, who kindly put at my disposal various photographs taken by him among the Argentine Tobas, and to the Artist, Mr. Eric Wasström in Helsingfors who, according to my own accurate descriptions, has sketched the Indian dances, performed at night, which are found on pages 85 and 147, as well as the Indian head found on p. 216. Miss Agnes Dawson B. Sc., has kindly revised my English manuscript and helped me to read the proofs.

Helsingfors, April, 1932.

R. K.

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Introduction.

The vast alluvial lowland commonly known under the name of *El Gran Chaco*, is situated in the heart of South America, being bounded in the east by the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, in the west by the eastern cordilleras of the Bolivian Andes, and in the north and south approximately by latitudes 20° and 30° South respectively. Politically this territory is divided between the republics Argentine, Paraguay, and Bolivia, but the boundaries between Paraguay and Bolivia have long been uncertain owing to the fact that the interior parts of the Chaco are still very little known and practically no-man's land. In fact, northern Chaco has up till now remained a white spot on the map of South America. The very name of Chaco has been much disputed, but this question may now be regarded as definitely settled. Chaco is a Spanish form of the Quichua name *chacu*, 'hunting', 'chase'. The word has reference to the great hunting expeditions which, as we know, were annually arranged by the Incas, and on which thousands of Indians were employed as drivers. The name *chacu* was later applied to the Indians who devoted themselves to this kind of chase, as well as to the tracts where these hunts took place.[1]) The Incas, of course, only knew a small part of the immense territory which is now called Chaco, more strictly speaking the forest-clad slopes of the eastern cordilleras as well as the adjacent plains, regions which formerly were and in parts still are extremely rich in all kinds of game. The interior regions, particularly east of Pilcomayo, inhabited by savage Indians, were unknown to the Incas and were not explored until our own days.

The climate in the Gran Chaco is on the whole subtropical, but subject to great variations, a fact that accounts for the different character of the vegetation in different parts of the country. In the west, where

[1]) See Enrique de Gandia, *Historia del Gran Chaco*. Madrid, 1930, pp. 7 sqq.

[p. 1]

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132 the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable,
137 we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these
134 kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

262 From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which
273 forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourliea decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sieyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

314 A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

132 It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called summers in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

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Mestizo houses in the neighbourhood of the Bolivian Andes.

Landscape in the vicinity of the Andes on the border of the Argentine Chaco.

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132 tains the rivers may at that time rise to a height of twenty feet above the normal. and in low-lying tracts inundations are by no means uncommon. The temperature may then frequently rise to 110° F. in the shade. The forests abound in algaroba and other wild fruits, and the natives devote themselves to the cultivation of their modest fields of pumpkin, water melon. manioc, and maize. But at the end of March a remarkable change is noticeable. The thunderstorms accompanied by showers of rain. which during the summer time are comparatively frequent, cease from then on. and a season of drought which lasts for several months sets in. Whereas in the summer the hot north wind is prevalent, the cold south wind is the rule during the dry season, and is one of the causes of the remarkable fall of temperature then taking place. In the early hours of the morning it may fall below freezing point, and the traveller who has spent the night in his open tent may, to his astonishment, find the water pools covered with a thin layer of ice. But about noon the temperature may again, if the sun shines, rise to an almost summerlike warmth.

136 Animal life in the Chaco is much the same as in tropical South America, but shows certain characteristic forms. In the pampas regions large flocks of the South American ostrich (*Rhea americana*) are frequently seen, rapidly taking flight at the approach of a party of equestrians. The Indians eagerly hunt this shy bird both on account of its flesh. which is highly appreciated as food, and its feathers which are used as ornaments on festival occasions. On the edge of forests large troops of peccaries (*Dicotyles labiatus* and *D. torquatus*) as well as deer are frequently encountered, whereas marshy regions are haunted by the tapir (*Tapirus americanus*). Occasionally a specimen of the great anteater (*Myrmecophaga jubata*) is seen; including the long, bushy tail this peculiar animal measures about seven feet; the snout is very long and pointed and on the back it has a bristly mane; the forefeet are strongly developed and provided with terrible claws with which the animal tears up the belly of its assailant. Next to the jaguar, the anteater is the most dangerous animal in the Chaco, and the Indians allege that it is a match even for this beast.

Of the carnivora the jaguar is the most important; it is fairly common especially in the cattle districts and attains here a larger size than in any other part of South America. The animal is rarely seen, but its tracks are often encountered on the path of the forest, and at night its howling is often heard as it roams about looking for prey. The traveller

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must then be on the alert and have his horses and mules well secured. 136
The settlers generally hunt the jaguar by means of hounds, of which of course a great number must be used. Badly attacked by its assailants, the beast at last seeks refuge in climbing a tree, where it is generally easily shot.

The natives stand in great fear of the jaguar, looking upon it as the 825
incarnation of an evil spirit, and the beast does in fact seem to have far less respect for the Indian than for a white man. In the religion and mythology of the Chaco Indians the jaguar plays an important part.

The puma is rare, and the same may be said of the maned wolf (*Canis* 136
jubatus) which is reported to exist in the Chaco, for I never saw or heard of any. The fox is very common on the plains, and its howling or barking is one of the characteristic sounds interrupting the silence of night. Of birds there is no great variety in the Chaco. Doves, wild turkeys, and small parrots are, in addition to ostriches, the birds most commonly seen in the pampas regions and forests. Only at the big lagoons, found here and there in the interior of the country, may one notice a rich bird-life, especially during the dry season. Ducks of different kinds, white and yellow herons, storks, and other aquatic birds in countless numbers give life to these places, whither also many animals of the forest descend to allay their thirst.

Venomous snakes, even rattlesnakes, are quite common on the plains, especially during the dry season. Both in the river Pilcomayo and in the lagoons alligators are found, although in the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco they are not as numerous as in the Rio Paraguay. The rivers moreover abound in fish, and all the Pilcomayo tribes live mainly by fishing.

Insect-life is very rich in summer-time. Different kinds of mosquitoes, crickets, large beetles, and especially the *Cicada* with its shrill whistling, shortly before sunset and at night fill the air with their weird sounds, innumerable croaking frogs joining in the concert. These manifestations of lower animal life, as they are perceived at sunset, are, I believe, the things that most impress a traveller in the Chaco.

Although mosquitoes are numerous and troublesome in the summer, the climate is on the whole healthy. Malarial fever does not occur, except [164]
when it is occasionally introduced by settlers or other white men. Rheumatism and catarrhs are the ailments from which the natives most commonly suffer.

The scarcity of water has been the greatest obstacle to the explora- 133
tion of the Chaco. In the Bolivian Chaco the traveller preferably keeps to

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133 the river Pilcomayo, following its sinuous course, and this is practically the only way known to white people hitherto. An explorer who undertook to penetrate at random into the interior of the unknown country east of the river, without being accompained by Indian guides, would be almost sure to perish from thirst within a few days. Many promising expeditions into the Chaco have ended disastrously in this way. Only the natives know where the few water places are to be found. Generally these consist of small pools, the stinking brown or green water of which seems almost undrinkable to a white man; but the explorer soon finds it good enough even for him and it will save the life both of man and beast.

149 Another danger to the explorer is the hostility of the savage natives who inhabit the country. This aspect of the Chaco tribes has become almost proverbial owing to the fact that several explorers have met a disastrous end at the hands of the savage Indians. In our own days the best known of these unfortunate explorers are Crevaux, Ibareta, and Boggiani, of whom the first mentioned was killed by the Toba Indians on the banks of the Rio Pilcomayo, at the place which still bears his name. Several expeditions have tried to explore the country, following the course of the Pilcomayo down to its confluence with the Rio Paraguay, but the first which succeeded was the Bolivian expediton under D. Campos in 1883. The interior of the Chaco, however, is still to a great extent unknown, and ethnographic exploration of this interesting country did not begin until a few decades ago.

114 The above description of the Chaco has particular reference to the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco and more especially to the region on both sides of the river Pilcomayo, of which I have acquired personal knowledge. My ethnological studies have in fact been limited to the most important of the tribes inhabiting that region, tribes which, when I first visited them, were very imperfectly known. The Pilcomayo is the largest of the few affluents that the great river Paraguay receives from the west. For the main part of its course the river flows through very little known country, and the tribes that have settled on its banks or roam about on the grassy plains or in the thickets of the interior still live completely — or at any rate did live at the time when I visited them — in a state of nature. The most important of these tribes are the Mataco, the Choroti, the Tobas, and the Ashluslay, who live partly on the right (Argentine), partly on the left (Bolivian) side of the river. The Mataco, the Choroti, and the Ashluslay, who linguistically are closely related to each other, form a group of their own. The Tobas, although a typical Chaco tribe, both

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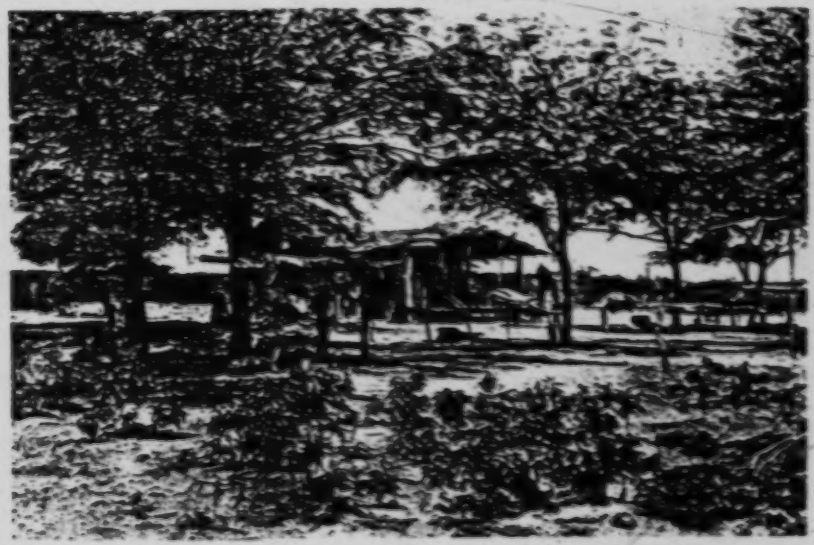
linguistically, anthropologically and in their whole character differ essentially from them. Their culture is undoubtedly the most important and the most interesting native culture on the Pilcomayo and in the whole Chaco.

Among the Pilcomayo tribes moreover many travellers reckon the Avas or Chiriguano [1]), who inhabit a large territory between the Upper



A settler's ranch on the Bolivian side of the Pilcomayo.

Rio Pilcomayo and the river Parapiti in the north, a territory forming the western limit of the unknown Chaco boreal. The Avas, who belong to the great Guarani people, form with the Guaranized Chané a special group with many distinguishing features in their culture, and should not therefore be included among the Chaco tribes proper. In 1912 I visited the largest villages nhabited by the Avas and also made some notes

[1]) 'Chiriguano' is a nickname given to these Indians by their enemies, the Quichuas, and has never been recognized by themselves; on the contrary, they regard it as an insult. These Guarani Indians call themselves *Ava* (that is, 'men'), and this is the only name that should be used of them in literature.

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000 on their customs. These Indians are now half-civilized and Christians in name, and we owe our best knowledge of their culture to the Catholic missionaries who have been active amongst them in former times. In the south the Avas have had contact with some of the Chaco tribes, especially with the Mataco, but without receiving any cultural influence from them.

114 The principal objects of my researches in the Chaco have been the Choroti and the Tobas as well as those Mataco Indians that have settled on the Bolivian side of the Pilcomayo, a tribe generally known under the name Mataco-Nocténes. Along the middle course of the river, not far from the Bolivian fort Guachalla, I also occasionally came in contact with the Ashluslay Indians, but found no opportunity to study their customs more thoroughly.

000 Before I proceed to describe the customs of the Indians visited by me, I shall give a short account of my travels in the Chaco.

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Chapter I.

My travels in the Gran Chaco.

In October 1911 I arrived in Buenos Aires by an English steamer, proceeding directly from London, and a few days later continued my journey by railway to my future field of research. The Argentine government, to which I was introduced by the Russian minister in Buenos Aires, Count Maximoff, did everything to facilitate my undertaking and even offered me an escort on my journey to the Indians — an offer which however I was obliged courteously to decline. My nearest goal was the sugar factory of Esperanza, situated about three miles from the small town San Pedro in the province of Jujuy in northern Argentine. At this factory thousands of Indian labourers are employed to cut the sugar cane in the fields surrounding the village. Among these native labourers almost all Chaco tribes are represented — especially the Tobas, the Mataco and the Choroti — and there are instances of Indians arriving from the interior parts of the country where no white man has yet put his foot. Here I had an excellent opportunity of making preliminary acquaintance with the Indian tribes whom I proposed to visit later on in their own land.

I was received with great kindness and hospitality by the owners of the sugar factory, the great English firm Leach Brothers, who helped me to get into contact with the Indians. At Esperanza I stayed for three weeks, making preparations for my expedition into the Chaco, so that it was not until in the middle of November that I could set out upon my journey. From San Pedro de Jujuy it is only a few hours railway journey to Embarcación, which at that time was the last station towards the north. From there on one could only travel on mule-back along the road which from Embarcación goes to southern Bolivia. Messrs. Leach had helped me to buy the mules at Esperanza and also got two peons to accompany me at least on the first part of my expedition.

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114 The way which leads from Embarcación up to Bolivia is what is called a *camino carretero*, a broad road suitable for big carts drawn by mules. It is illustrative of the primitive means of communication in Bolivia that nearly all articles of commerce had to be transported along this road up to such distant places as Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Mojos in the heart of Bolivia — a journey which takes months to accompliah. My own nearest goal was a place called Yacuiba, a big village which at that time belonged to Bolivia, but a few years later on was annexed by Argentine. The journey from Embarcación to Yacuiba takes seven days. Embarcación is situated on the bank of the Rio Bermejo, a tributary of the Pilcomayo, and this river had to be crossed, the mules swimming over it. Having a few hours later passed the small village Miraflores, we arrived at the open plains varied with small forests which here form the westernmost part of the enormous territory of the Gran Chaco. These regions are almost uninhabited; only isolated *tolderias* (villages) of the Mataco Indians are found, from which occasionally we could hear the beating of drums or the incantations of the medicine-men, when they were trying to call forth rain or to drive away evil disease-bringing spirits. The scarcity of water in fact was great, for although it was the beginning of the rainy season, very little rain had as yet fallen, and at the halting-places it was generally difficult to find water for the beasts. In a place called Bomba, inhabited by a lonely settler, we had to pay for the drinking-water, which was brought from a distant pool near the cordilleras rising in the west.

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About midway between Embarcación and Yacuiba lies the village Tartagal, which at that time only consisted of a couple of poor houses. In this region nature entirely changes its aspect. The traveller, having previously marched for days through open plains and thickets, suddenly enters a virgin forest of almost tropical grandeur, where the great variety of climbers and creepers, covering not only the giant trees but also bushes and plants, especially attracts attention. This is a type of scenery which is only met with in the vicinity of the Andes, never in the interior of the Chaco. We had to march a couple of days through this interesting primeval forest before we again came out on the plains. Just north of Tartagal there is the small village Aguaray — like all villages in this region, rather a group of primitive ranches — whence it is only one day's journey to Yacuiba.

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Yacuiba was formerly a place of bad repute, being a resort of criminals and adventurers of the kind so frequently met with in places far away from the centres of civilization in Argentine and Bolivia. At the

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The road leading to the village Yacuiba (visible in the background).

A settlement of mestizos and Indians in the Argentina Chaco, near Yacuiba.

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114 time of my stay in Yacuiba conditions were much improved, and the village has since made considerable progress, chiefly owing to some foreign commercial houses which have established themselves there. Yacuiba has now several hundred inhabitants, among whom there is a small number of Europeans. The village became my head-quarters for the whole time that I travelled in the Chaco. One of the foreigners, Don Carloe Holzer, did me great service in helping me to get peons and to prepare for my expeditions into different parts of the country.

114 There are two roads leading from Yacuiba to the river Pilcomayo; the
491 one, passing through the village of Caiza, takes the traveller to the small place called Crevaux; the other leading directly along the line at the 22nd degree of latitude to the Bolivian fort d'Orbigny. Both these places are situated close to the river, the former a few leagues to the north of the latter. On my first expedition to the Pilcomayo in November 1911 I took the second road, the one leading to d'Orbigny. From Yacuiba this place can be reached in three days, travelling on horseback. In addition to the riding-mules I had three baggage mules and was accompanied by two peons none of whom had been at the Pilcomayo before. These regions are entirely uninhabited; there are neither settlers nor Indian villages.
[133] The way goes partly through deep forests, partly through arid deserts and — near the river — through grassy plains. The right (Argentine) bank of the Pilcomayo is extremely flat; it is difficult to imagine more monotonous scenery.

114 At d'Orbigny a small body of ten Bolivian soldiers commanded by a lieutenant was garrisoned and I had counted on their assistance at the crossing of the Pilcomayo, which in the rainy season is very broad and rapid. The fort, however, turned out to be situated on the opposite side of the river and was not even visible from the spot where we were. No human being could be seen on whom it would have been possible to call for assistance. At last we caught sight of two Indians who had swum over the river from the opposite bank evidently for the sake of fishing on the Argentine side where the water is lower. They were Toba Indians who knew enough Spanish to inform us that there was absolutely no canoe to be had either on this or the other side of the river, and that all must cross it by swimming, even the mules. Since the Pilcomayo at this place has a breadth of nearly one mile, it seemed by no means a trifle to cross it with the baggage and the mules. Happily the rainy season had not yet properly begun, so the river was comparatively low. The Indians offered to help us take over the beasts and for this purpose went in search

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The left (Argentine) side of the Pilcomayo, where the country is extremely flat.

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On the right (Bolivian) side the Pilcomayo in some places forms high walls (*barrancas*).

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River scenery from the middle course of the Pilcomayo.

The Pilcomayo during an inundation.

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M 114

of a ford. Those Chaco Indians who live beside the river, clever swimmers as they are, possess great experience and dexterity in performing such tasks and in fact, no white traveller in the Chaco could easily do without their services. At the fordable place where we crossed to the other side the water was so low that men and animals had to swim only a short distance, our clothes being taken over in a big cow's hide folded up so as to form a sort of vessel. Within half an hour we were all safely on the other side of the river and could continue our journey.

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The Bolivian sub-tribes of the great Toba nation inhabit the region between fort d'Orbigny in the south and the village Villa Montes (Mission of San Francisco), situated about twenty leagues to the north, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo. I proposed to visit these Indians later on. For the present my destination was the country of the Choroti which lies about midway between the fort d'Orbigny and the next Bolivian military station on the Pilcomayo, Guachalla. To reach the first Choroti village I had to travel about eight leagues along the narrow path which — in the main following the river but at times retiring far from it — runs from d'Orbigny in a southerly direction. This path is in some places almost obliterated, especially when it leads through the plains, and for the traveller there is the frequent risk of losing it, in which case he may easily go astray in the wilds.

C 648

It was in the beginning of December that I first made the acquaintance of the Choroti in their own land. These Indians are now what the Bolivians call *indios mansos* (tame Indians) and there is no danger for a white man in visiting them. The few white settlers on the Pilcomayo have very seldom had any trouble with the Choroti, who — in contrast to the arrogant Tobas — are a peaceful people. A *kilai* (the name given every white man) is therefore kindly received if he himself treats the Indians well and does not arrive empty-handed. So it was with Nordenskiöld during his stay among the Choroti, and so it was with me. It is not possible to live among the Chaco Indians without bringing articles of exchange, and for my own part I had a good supply of such things. Among these were not only shirts, needles, thread, small mirrors, glass beads etc., but above all tobacco which is the article most appreciated by these Indians. Tobacco in fact is a sort of tribute which everybody must pay who travels in the Chaco and has to deal with the natives. Every male member of the small community whose guest I was had to receive his share — of course only a small quantity, just enough to fill the pipe a couple of times — and the gift had to be repeated every day. The Choroti

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only smoke for pleasure, and I doubt whether they ever used the tobacco ceremonially as is the rule among the Indians of tropical South America. The custom is evidently of comparatively recent origin and has been introduced by the whites.

Choroti is a Guarani name given to our Indians by the Avas (Chiriguano) and now recognized by themselves. Their proper tribal name, however, is *Jóhuaha* [1]), a word the etymology of which is obscure but which seems to be equivalent to »our own people». Among themselves the Choroti never use any other name than Jóhuaha.

In the history of the Gran Chaco, a small and peaceful tribe like the *Choroti* can have played only an insignificant rôle, and the earliest European explorers seem not to have known them. The first author who mentions them is Father Lozano, S. J., who in his book of 1733 calls them Xolotas. But he tells us absolutely nothing about them, and the same may be said of several later travellers who occasionally mention them. The Swedish traveller von Rosen, who made a short visit among the Choroti in 1902, has published a small study of these Indians under the title *The Chorotes Indians of the Bolivian Chaco* (Stockholm, 1904). But v. Rosen's paper is based on very superficial observation and contains several errors which make its ethnographic value rather problematic. [2]) This may partly be due to the fact that v. Rosen never visited the Choroti in their own land on the other side of the Pilcomayo river, but only those families of the tribe which have been in the habit of living for certain periods near the village Caiza, situated just north of Yacuiba, at the easternmost cordilleras of the Andes.

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[1]) Nordenskiöld erroneously gives this name as *Yóshuahá* (*Indianerleben*, p. 28) and Hunt equally erroneously as *Yofuaha* (*El Chorati o Yofuaha*, *Revista del Museo de La Plata*. Bd. 23. Liverpool, 1915). The Indians themselves most clearly pronounce their name *Jóhuaha*, with the accent on the first syllable. The f-sound is lacking in the Choroti language, as in the languages of many other South American Indians.

[2]) Thus, when v. Rosen says that »polygamy only occurs among the rich, and the caciques have quite a number of wives», this sentence alone contains three mistakes. First, the Choroti are strictly monogamous, any form of polygamy being prohibited by their social morality and their women, who are extremely jealous; secondly, there are no »rich» people among the Choroti, all being equally rich or equally poor; and thirdly, although we may speak of caciques or chiefs among them, these have very limited power and do not distinguish themselves from the rest of the tribe in the way v. Rosen's statement seems to indicate. — Evidently v. Rosen has confounded the Choroti chiefs with those of other and more advanced tribes, probably the Avas (Chiriguano) or the Tobas.

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C 114

In 1908 another Swedish ethnographer, Erland Nordenskiöld, lived in all for about three months among four or five of the Pilcomayo tribes, and in his popular book *Indianerleben in El Gran Chaco* (1912) has given a general account of the material culture and the daily life of these natives. For detailed and methodical studies of their social customs, religious beliefs, etc., Nordenskiöld had no time and no training, and probably very little interest, since the main object of his travels in the Gran Chaco was to make ethnographic collections for Swedish museums. It is curious that although Nordenskiöld lived on very friendly terms with the Choroti and the Ashluslay and tried in every respect to accommodate himself to their customs, he could find out nothing about their intellectual culture and religion, not even the name of their spirits. Thus for instance Nordenskiöld erroneously describes the dances of the Choroti as being purely profane, overlooking their magical or religious character, which of course gives them their chief interest. As to the Tobas, the most important of the Chaco tribes, Nordenskiöld did not visit them at all.

M 114

The English missionary Rickhard J. Hunt, who visited the Choroti after I had left the Chaco, has chiefly studied their language.

My own task was to complete Nordenskiöld's general account of the material culture of the Chaco tribes with as detailed studies of their customs and intellectual culture as possible. For this purpose I stayed about eight months among the Choroti, after which I settled down among the Tobas, making also occasional visits to some Mataco tribes which were culturally closely related to the Tobas. My studies were rendered particularly difficult by the fact that neither the Choroti nor the Tobas speak Spanish, while interpreters were impossible to obtain. I had to pick up both languages gradually, which of course meant a considerable waste of time since language to me could only be a medium for the study of native culture and was not in itself the object of my studies. It was not until the end of my stay among the Choroti that I met some Indians who could speak a little Spanish. Another thing which, in its way, hampered my studies of the Choroti was the difficulty of getting provisions during the dry season, when the natives themselves are often brought to the very verge of starvation. Since the river was as yet too swollen to allow me to cross it for the purpose of returning to Yacuiba, I myself had similar difficulties until at last I got some provisions from one of the few settlers living on the Pilcomayo.

Owing to these circumstances the material collected by me among the

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Choroti and Toba Indians is not so rich as I wished it to be, nor have I been able to realize my plan of returning later to Chaco for the sake of completing it. My next great expedition took me to the Indians of the Amazon territory. However, I think the new facts I have been able to gather relating to their general sociology, their customs and beliefs, magic dances, etc., form an important contribution to our knowledge of the intellectual culture of the Chaco Indians, so strangely neglected by earlier ethnographical travellers. In fact, the dances of the South American Indians have never before been the object of detailed studies. The Chaco culture has in many respects a character of its own, differing markedly, for instance, from the cultures peculiar to the tropical virgin forests in northern South America. Taken as a whole it is much poorer; neither the material nor the intellectual culture in these inhospitable regions has attained the same stage of development as in the regions better endowed by nature. Even the rites and ceremonies in which religious life finds expression among the Chaco Indians are comparatively few.

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The Choroti are split up into three minor tribes which are settled in different parts of the territory occupied by these Indians. One of these sub-tribes lives on the left bank of the Pilcomayo just in latitude 22° S. and a few leagues to the north of it. Their chief at the time when I lived among them was Toula. A second sub-tribe lives about ten leagues east of them in the interior of the country. In March 1912 I undertook an expedition to these Indians, who had never before been visited by a European. Two Choroti Indians accompanied me as guides, and without them it would have been impossible to find one's way through this maze of shrublike forest land, broken here and there by small open plains. Whereas the country adjacent to the great water source Pilcomayo is fairly fertile, the soil in the interior is too dry and sandy to be suitable for cultivation. Agriculture is practised by the Choroti of the interior on a still more modest scale than by the river Indians, and since they are poor hunters their life must be extremely hard at those periods of the year when there are no wild fruits. These Choroti, like the rest, live in small communities and their total number does not exceed a few hundreds. Their chief at that time was a comparatively young man called Anempá.

The third and largest Choroti tribe is found within a few leagues of Fortín Guachalla, the Bolivian military settlement mentioned before. These Indians only live on the banks of the river during the dry season, when the scarcity of water renders life in the interior impossible. The

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necessity of fishing also at that time compels them to stay near the river. 619
But as soon as the rainy season sets in and the algaroba, tusca, and other 361
fruits begin to ripen, the Indians take up their abode in the forest close by some small lagoon or a rare water-hole several leagues from the river, spending most of their »summer» time in drinking algaroba beer, feasting, and dancing. The Indians of the Guachalla region form the main bulk of the Choroti tribe and number about a thousand individuals. Their [648]
immediate neighbours in the south are the Ashluslay, to whom the Choroti are closely related in their culture. There is much communication between the two tribes and intermarriage is frequent. Thus the chief of the Choroti, the old Ātamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but since [611]
mother-right prevails among the Chaco Indians, he had become a member of the Choroti tribe.

There seems to be a certain antagonism between the different Choroti 619
tribes, in consequence of which they have very little intercourse with one another. I particularly noticed such an antagonism between those Choroti 184
who live on the river and those living in the interior. It would have been impossible for me to get a guide among the people of the chief Toula to accompany me to Anempā's tribe. Since to these Indians, who in general live to a great extent by fishing, the possession of the river is of great importance, I suppose it is originally due to this enmity that some Choroti Indians have settled in the inhospitable regions in the interior where they are found to-day. These latter even speak a somewhat differ- [197]
ent dialect of the Choroti language. Thus, one of the commonest words in the language, the word for 'house', is in the dialect of the river Indians *uk*, in the dialect of the inland Indians again *sáuo*.

The Choroti living on the river call the Choroti tribe inhabiting the interior of the Chaco *Asówa*.

The total number of the Choroti I estimate at about 2,000 or a [161]
little more.[1]) The surrounding tribes are much larger. Of these I have 648
already mentioned the southern neighbours of the Choroti, the Ashluslay, whom the Choroti call *Ahle*. Their neighbours in the north are the Tobas, whom they call *Johlōki*, and another Chaco tribe, the Tapiete, whom they call *Ohuénik*. Their neighbours in the west again are the Mataco, whom the Choroti call *Hotenúk*. They have dealings with all these tribes, although at times they have been at war with them, or at

[1]) Consequently, when Nordenskiöld estimates the Choroti at 4,000 individuals, this is a great exaggeration.

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C 648 least with the Mataco. The Choroti also very much fear the powerful and ferocious Tobas and do not like to pass through their country.

M 114 Having finished my studies of the Choroti Indians, I left at the beginning of April for Yacuiba to prepare for my next Chaco expedition, when I proposed to visit the Tobas. Since I could not cross the river which was still swollen by the rains, I decided to return to Yacuiba through the village of Villa Montes (Mission of San Francisco), situated about thirty leagues to the north of d'Orbigny, on the bank of the Pilcomayo. From this village it is a journey of nearly three days to Yacuiba. A narrow riding-path, which in the main follows the course of the river, takes the traveller up to Villa Montes through the dense forests bordering the banks of the Pilcomayo in this region. The typical Chaco scenery disappears as one approaches the cordilleras. The village itself is situated on the very border of the Chaco, at the point where the Pilcomayo leaves the mountains.

M 114 484 A journey like this is very difficult and even dangerous during the rainy season. In many places the primitive riding-path had been completely destroyed by the strong current of the swollen river. Every now and then large pieces of the river bank were detached and plunged into the water with a tremendous rumble, carrying with them giant trees and bushes. In such places the traveller had to cut a new path through the thickets of the virgin forest for himself and his horse, which of course was often connected with great difficulties. It is easy to understand that in this way the Pilcomayo has undergone considerable changes in the course of time. As is shown by old river-beds, the river has several times even taken another course.

T 114 These regions are inhabited mainly by Toba Indians, and on my journey to Villa Montes I passed through some of their villages. Since these Tobas are comparatively easy of access, I decided to stay among them on my second Chaco expedition.

In Yacuiba I was obliged to stay for more than one month, so it was not until the middle of May that I could again leave for the Chaco. Passing through the little village of Caiza to Villa Montes, which became my head-quarters for the next six months, I settled in a Toba village about eight leagues to the south of this place, visiting later on the more distant Toba tribes. Although the Tobas have had a bad reputation — among other things these savages killed the explorer Crevaux — I was received by them in quite a friendly manner. In regard to the language, I had in the beginning the same difficulties as among the Choroti. The two

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The river Pilcomayo, seen from the village Villa Montes (San Francisco).

Pilcomayo where it leaves the mountains near Villa Montes.
The mules are being taken over the river by Indians.

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A landscape characteristic of the Chaco on the middle course af the Pilcomayo: grassy plains varying with patches of shrubby forest and palm groves.

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A Bolivian fort on the middle course of the Pilcomayo.

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languages are entirely different, and it was not at first possible to find a Toba Indian who could speak Spanish. Later on I found some Indian interpreters and moreover learnt to speak the language tolerably well myself.

The *Tobas* are the largest and most important tribe, not only of those living on the Pilcomayo, but of the Chaco tribes in general. The Indians among whom I had settled form the northernmost tribe of the Tobas and are the only ones living in Bolivia. These Tobas have dealings with the Avas in the north and with the Mataco-Nocténes in the east, and many of them speak or understand Guarani. In my estimation they only number about 1,500.

As to the other Tobas, another and larger tribe is settled on the right (Argentine) side of the Pilcomayo, approximately between latitudes 23° and 24° S. These Indians are the same as those known in literature under the name of Pilagá (Pitilagá) and they have the same culture and speak about the same dialect as the Bolivian Tobas. They are quite numerous; the great Toba chief Taycolique, whose acquaintance I made in the Bolivian Chaco, estimated them at about three or four thousand individuals. On the lower Pilcomayo these Pilagá are neighbours to a third tribe of the Tobas which occupies the region southwards from the province of Formosa almost to the Paraguay river. In the dialect which they speak and in some of their customs, they differ considerably from the rest. They are still more numerous than the Pilagá; the chief Taycolique put their number at ten thousand, which however may be an exaggeration. Boggiani, in his *Compendio de etnografía Paraguaya moderna*, speaking of the Tobas, describes mainly this tribe, of which some call themselves *Toba-michi*, »the little Tobas«. The Tobas which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche had an opportunity to study anthropologically in Buenos Aires in 1899 and who called themselves Takshik were evidently also of the same tribe. I myself met these Takshik at the sugar factories of Esperanza in 1911, and they told me that they speak quite a different dialect from the one spoken by the Pilagá and the other Tobas.

In 1920 the Argentine Tobas in the region of Formosa were visited by a Swedish expedition, the photographer of which, Mr. W. Hansson, has kindly placed at my disposal several of the photographs taken by him among these Indians.

This is all we know about the Tobas of the present day. A few words may be added as to the history of these Indians. Although they have been known by name for many centuries and have frequently had both

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friendly and hostile intercourse with the whites, comparatively little has been known of them down to our own days. Very frequently the Tobas have been confused with other Argentine or Paraguayan tribes — a fact easily explained by the extremely vagrant life of these savages and the many sub-tribes into which they have been divided. Many different names have been given them; formerly the Spaniards called them *Frentones* — owing to the peculiar way in which they used to shave off the hair of the head — the Quichua-speaking peoples in the region of Tucumán again called them *Juries*. In our own time we meet in ethnological literature — besides the name Toba — others, such as *Mocobís*, *Natokóit*, *Pilagá*, *Takshik*, etc. The Tobas visited by me called themselves *Komlék*, which simply means »our own people», *komi* being in the Toba language the possessive form of the first person plural, and *lek* a suffix which occurs in nearly all Toba words denoting kind of people.

Of all these Indians we now know that they merely form sub-tribes of one and the same Toba people and that they belong to a great group of Chaco Indians called *Guaycurú*, among whom we also have to reckon the ancient *Abipones* described by the Jesuit Father Dobrizhoffer[1]). The name Guaycurú, accordingly, does not denote any particular tribe but is a generic term. The languages spoken by all these tribes seem to be merely dialects of one and the same principal language.

The former geographical diffusion of the Tobas is uncertain owing to their nomadic habits. Even their original home is not known with certainty. The only thing we know is that for many centuries they have roamed the vast plains between the rivers Salado and Paraguay in southern and central Gran Chaco of the republics Argentine and Bolivia. The fact that their original home was in the frigid pampas regions of the south, may be inferred from one of their myths which tells of the destruction of the world by snow and ice.

Although the name of the Tobas is frequently met in anthropological literature, the previous information about them is scanty and incomplete. Many travellers have formerly, as in our own days, described their physical characteristics and their material culture, but their social customs have been too superficially studied, and of their religion and superstition scarcely anything is known.

The first author to speak of the Tobas was probably Father Lozano,

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[1]) Dobrizhoffer, (Martin). *Geschichte der Abiponer*, 3 Bde. Vien, 1783—84.

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S. J., when he describes the Frentones of the region of Tucumán [1]). That these Frentones were Tobas appears clearly from the few notes the Father gives about them, describing their tall build, their ferocious and warlike character, their way of painting themselves, etc. At the end of the same century they were visited by the naturalist and traveller Azara, who however, in his *Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale* treats of their customs in purely negative terms: »Ils ne connaissent non plus ni divinité, ni religion, ni culte, ni chefs, ni lois obligatoires« [2]). Azara in this fell into the same error as many other passing travellers; not being able to learn anything about the customs of the natives, he assumed that they had no customs at all. The same in part holds true of d'Orbigny. In his *l'Homme Américain* he describes the mental characteristics as well as the industrial art of the Tobas in detail, but as to their social life he does not add much to our knowledge. Of their religion he merely states that »leurs croyances religieuses sont bornées«, and in fact, almost the only thing he tells about them in this respect is that they believe in a future life, which he infers from their custom of interring their dead with their whole property. [3])

The Bolivian explorer D. Campos who in 1883, following the river Pilcomayo, passed through the whole territory inhabited by the Tobas, incidentally gives some data concerning these Indians [4]). But our present knowledge of the Tobas we chiefly owe to Father Cardús, who in his book *Las misiones franciscanas entre los infieles de Bolivia* describes various native tribes of the Gran Chaco. What he tells us about the material culture, marriages, feasts, wars, etc. of the Tobas is of great interest, even though — in conformity with the majority of the Christian missionaries — he displays a special interest in their superstitious and cruel customs. As to their religious ideas and practices, however, he gives no information, considering the study of these things useless. The moral character of the Tobas the Father, like most other writers, depicts in very dark colours. [5])

Boggiani's small treatise on the Tobas in *Compendio de etnografia Para-*

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[1]) Lozano, *Historia de Compañia de Jesús en la provincia de Paraguay*. Madrid, 1754, I. 98 sqq.

[2]) Azara, *Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale*, Paris, 1809. 4 vols. II. 163.

[3]) d'Orbigny, *L'homme Américain* (*Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale*. Tome IV). Paris 1843. p. 232.

[4]) Campos, *De Tarija a la Asuncion*, Buenos Aires, 1888, pp. 250—257.

[5]) Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas entre los infieles de Bolivia*. Barcelona, 1886, pp. 258 sqq.

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guaya moderna is essentially a compilation founded on the works of Campos, Cardús, and other writers [1]). The same holds true of the monograph of Father Ducci which, besides, only deals with one sub-tribe of the Tobas on the lower Pilcomayo. [2])

The ethnological studies of the Toba tribe contained in this book mainly refer, as appears from my previous statements, to the Bolivian Tobas, but also to the Toba Pilagá of Argentine. I met the latter at the sugar factories of Esperanza in June 1912, and moreover, some of my Indian informants in Bolivia were from Argentine or had lived among their kinsmen there. The general culture of the Pilagá, as already pointed out, is much the same as that of the Bolivian Tobas, although on the whole they seem to have preserved their old customs better than the latter.

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The third tribe visited by me were the *Mataco*. Next to the Tobas, the Mataco form the largest of the Argentine Chaco tribes, but only a part of them may still be said to live in a state of nature. Three principal Mataco tribes can be distinguished. One of them inhabits the corner in northern Argentine roughly limited by Tartagal in the west and Rio Bermejo — an affluent of the Pilcomayo — in the south. These Mataco are called Vejós and are those most strongly influenced by civilization. The second tribe, known under the name of Mataco-Guisnay, lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo about ten leagues south of Fortín Guachalla. The third tribe, called Mataco-Nocténes — occupies the great triangle roughly formed by lines connecting the villages Yacuiba, Villa Montes, and Crevaux. Those Nocténes who live on the right bank of the Pilcomayo, between Villa Montes and Crevaux, have preserved their original culture best. Among these Indians I spent about one month in October and November 1912. They are culturally closely related to the Tobas living on the other side of the river, and intermarriage between the two tribes is frequent. Still the Nocténes speak their own language which, apart from certain dialectal differences, is the same as that spoken by the Vejós and the Guisnay. The Mataco language shows great affinity to the Choroti language which justifies us in referring both tribes to one and the same principal group. A third Chaco tribe of the same group are probably the Ashluslay, the language of which is unfortunately so far quite unknown to us.

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[1]) Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya moderna*. Asunción, 1900.

[2]) Fray Zacarias Ducci, *Los Tobas de Taccagalé con arte y vocabulario Toba-castellano*. Buenos Aires, 1904.

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The classical work on the Mataco Indians, in fact almost the only work dealing with the culture of these Indians at some length, is the one published by the Italian engineer Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, a monograph forming part of the larger work by the same author *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*. Firenze, 1881. Pelleschi's account of the customs and beliefs of the Mataco, however, is neither systematic nor complete. During my stay among the Mataco-Nocténes I succeeded in collecting a great many new facts especially as regards their religion, and these new facts are published in this book. I may add that — apart from a certain cultural influence exerted upon the Nocténes by their neighbours, the Toba Indians — their customs and beliefs seem to be much the same as those of the other Mataco tribes. [1])

Since the Chaco Indians, at any rate the tribes of the Pilcomayo, have many essential features in common, I shall in this book treat of their cultures in connection with one another, taking care however to point out every time whether the particular custom or idea dealt with has been found among the Tobas, the Mataco, or the Choroti.

The following works have hitherto been published by me on the customs of the Chaco Indians.

La Religion de los Indios Mataco-Noctènes de Bolivia Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires. Tomo XXIV, 1913.

The Couvade or Male Child-bed among the South American Indians (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar.* Bd LVII. Helsingfors, 1915.

Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar.* Bd. LVII. Helsingfors, 1915.

Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der Südamerikanischen Indianer (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis.* Humaniora. Abo, 1920).

The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis.* Humaniora. Abo, 1923).

A great many facts concerning the Chaco Indians are also contained in my work *The Civilization of the South American Indians* (London & New York, 1926).

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[1]) As to the history of the Chaco tribes, see the important work by Ludwig Kersten, *Die Indianerstämme des Gran Chaco bis zum Ausgange des 18 Jahrhunderts. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Ethnographie Südamerikas* (*Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* XVII. Leiden, 1905).

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Chapter II.

General characteristics and material culture.

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In their physical characteristics the *Choroti* and the *Mataco* show the same affinity as appears in their languages. Both of them are strongly built and of middle height, the Mataco somewhat taller than the Choroti. The average height of the former seems to be about 163 or 164 cm. for the men and 154 or 155 cm. for the women; of the latter about 162 or 163 cm. for the men and 152 or 153 cm. for the women. In their sturdy appearance the Mataco resemble the mountain Indians, and in former times there has probably been intermarriage between them and the Quichuas. The hair of both tribes is black, coarse and straggling and is worn long by both men and women, except when it is temporarily cut short for ceremonial reasons. The eyes are dark-brown, the nose somewhat flattened, and the features of the face generally irregular, especially among the Mataco. Both tribes know the custom of tattooing the face, the women being always tattooed, the men only in some cases, and never as completely as the women.

I need not dwell upon the physical characteristics of the *Tobas* since they have been described by nearly all authors ever since Lozano. They certainly form an easily recognisable type of Indian, differing considerably from the rest of the Chaco tribes, one salient feature being their remarkably tall and strong build of body. The Tobas are in fact among the tallest of all South American Indians, being in this respect comparable with the ancient Patagonians, to whom they were probably related, as well as with the present Ona Indians of the mainland of Tierra del Fuego. The physical anthropology of the Tobas, just as that of the Mataco and the Choroti, has been studied scientifically by the German anthropologist Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche.[1])

[1]) Lehmann-Nitsche, R. *Estudios antropológicos sobre los Chiriguanos, Chorotes, Matacos y Tobas* (*Anales del Museo de La Plata*. Buenos Aires, 1908).

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In disposition the three tribes show great differences. The *Choroti* are pleasant and cheerful, and display to a high degree that humorous spirit which is often characteristic of the Indian even when he looks serious. They are lazy and carefree and love amusement, feasting, dancing, and games above everything. When the Choroti Indian has plenty of food and algaroba beer for the moment, he makes merry and eats and drinks as much as he can, but has no thought for the morrow and does not store provisions like the more advanced Chaco tribes. This particularly holds true of the men; the women, who in general are more industrious, show more forethought in this respect, collecting wild fruits in great quantities when they are in season, and keeping the seed-corn till the following sowing. But on the whole poverty is an outstanding feature of the material culture of the Choroti, and this is no doubt due to a great extent to their own character.

The Choroti are — at least nowadays — a peaceful people, and in the insignificant wars they have sometimes waged with the Mataco on the other side of the river, they have manifested very little organization or discipline. As I was told by settlers on the Pilcomayo, the Choroti were formerly more warlike, and like other Chaco tribes, they were even in the habit of scalping those enemies whom they killed during their raids.

The *Mataco*, although anthropologically closely related to the Choroti, differ from them considerably in character. The Mataco Indian is serious, taciturn, and gloomy, and in consequence more addicted to religion and superstition than his brother the Choroti Indian. At least nowadays, when the Indians are strongly influenced by European civilization, the Mataco Indian will not make a reliable servant and companion. Cleanliness is not a particular characteristic of the Choroti, but the Mataco are probably the dirtiest of all Chaco tribes. This too may in part be a consequence of their contact with the whites. On the other hand, the Mataco are more industrious and energetic than the Choroti, and accordingly, in their wars, have proved more valiant and capable of more organization than their primitive neighbours. In these respects the Mataco, at any rate the Bolivian tribes, resemble their neighbours the Tobas more than the Choroti.

As to the *Tobas*, their moral qualities and disposition have been described with much unanimity by many travellers. Nearly all have characterized them as bad, ferocious, treacherous, thievish, etc., qualities which they have especially displayed towards the whites. Typical on

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this point is the description of Father Cardús, from which the following passage may be quoted:

»The Toba has a lively, daring, and suspicious look. He is treacherous and lies like other Indians, but he is more skilled in dissimulating his feelings, he gives himself the appearance of being calm, he is open and frank in his manners, he speaks with ease and without fear. He is vivacious, cunning, proud, valiant, bold, and ferocious. Even his language seems to be invented exclusively for his serious and arrogant character, and in his mode of speech he is always imperative and haughty.

»The Tobas entertain an implacable hatred against the whites, and partly for the sake of revenge, partly from custom, they have, up to this day, done them all the harm they have been able to do them.« [1])

This descriptive account is in the main correct, but somewhat incomplete. It is true that the Tobas are nowadays less savage than they were formerly, but their character is at bottom the same and must needs reveal itself to one who lives among them for a long time. If the Tobas have proved bad and treacherous to the whites, this is because they have looked upon the latter as their natural enemies, from whom, with much reason, they have expected nothing good. This also is the reason why as a rule they have done them all the harm they have been able to do them«. However, from this rule there are exceptions. Thus Dr. Campos mentions the extremely valuable aid that was given him by the wild Tobas during his difficult expedition from Tarija to Asunción along the river Pilcomayo, and he confesses that without the assistance of the Indians he would never have come through. When the Tobas have conceived friendship towards a white man and given up their natural distrust, they will often display qualities quite contrary to those just mentioned. They may on closer acquaintance prove good-hearted, helpful, and hospitable, nay, even give proof of a tact which one would hardly expect from a savage people.

The distrust which the Tobas feel towards the whites is also the main reason why they have never been converted to Christianity. All endeavours of the Catholic Fathers to christianize them have been futile, and the Mission of San Francisco, founded in 1860, only existed till 1873, when it was given up. Like many other South American tribes the Tobas have tried to conserve their independence till the last, perhaps knowing sufficiently well the benefits of the Christian civilization. In spite of

[1]) Cardús, *Las misiones Franciscanas*, p. 259.

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this they have gradually become more civilized, and in the same degree, of course, their culture has undergone changes and modifications.

The material culture of uncivilized peoples can, at least in its essential aspects, be studied even by amateurs and travellers who stay among them only for a short time. Since this side of the culture of the Pilcomayo tribes, more particularly of the Choroti and the Ashluslay, has been described by Nordenskiöld, I need not dwell long upon it here. However — as I believe to have adequately shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* — the material culture of a savage people can never be properly studied isolated from its intellectual culture. The extremely superficial view Nordenskiöld takes of Indian culture in general cannot fail to show itself in his treatment of the ergology of the Indians, just as it shows itself for instance in his erroneous view of their dances and games. In the way in which the Indians manufacture and use their weapons and implements, their ornaments, the instruments connected with their religious ceremonies etc., their whole mentality finds expression, and no ethnographer disregarding the psychology of the Indians and their »superstitions» therefore is likely to give a really scientific account even of their material culture [1]). But a real insight into the mentality of an uncivilized people of course makes a prolonged stay among that people necessary.

Since the material culture of a people is always to a great extent dependent on natural conditions, it is easy to understand for instance that in dress and ornaments, in the methods of constructing the houses, in agriculture, industry, and the general mode of life a great homogeneity is to be found between the different Chaco tribes. In a subtropical land like the Chaco, where the weather is often very hot,

[1]) It is characteristic on this point that Nordenskiöld for instance calls the drums, rattle gourds, whistles, etc. of the Pilcomayo Indians »musical instruments», entirely ignoring the fact that these objects — as also the bull-roarers, which to Nordenskiöld are simply »play-things» — have a purely magic significance. («The Choroti and the Ashluslay possess a good many musical instruments», etc., *An Ethno-Geographical Analysis of the Material Culture of Two Indian Tribes*, 1919, p. 164). I wish to point out that these tribes do not in fact possess *a single* musical instrument since, as conceived by the Indians, the said objects have absolutely nothing to do with »music» in the sense of the word familiar to us. I should presume that the first thing an ethnographer, dealing with the material culture of a savage people, has to observe is to name their objects by their right names and not to give them names suggested by a certain similarity they may have to objects known to civilized peoples.

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In subtropical land like the Chaco, where the weather is often very hot especially during the summer-times, dress is naturally of the most simple kind. Both among the Mataco, the Choroti, and the Tobas, the most important article of the man's clothing is a small cotton waist-cloth which serves as a covering and protection for the genitals. In addition to this waist-cloth the Mataco and the Choroti formerly wore a kind of broad fringed leather-belt round the loins, whereas the Tobas covered the genitals with a small apron of skin or stuff. The rest of the body is among all the tribes generally kept entirely naked or is only covered by the usual necklaces and other ornaments, or by red *urucú*-painting. When the weather is cold, and on festival occasions, the men also wear big woollen blankets with interwoven linear patterns mostly in red colour. The blankets of the Lenguas and other tribes in eastern Chaco often show designs denoting venomous snakes etc., but such patterns are unknown to the Choroti, and where they are found they have originally been obtained from the interior of the country. Weaving is among all Chaco tribes exclusively a work incumbent on the women.

The Choroti man adjusts his blanket in different ways. In cold or wet weather it is wrapped round the body so as to cover one or both shoulders; when it is hot, he allows it to fall in a double fold from his waist, where it is either fastened by a belt or by tucking the folds of one corner into the other.

The usual clothing of the women is a short cotton petticoat reaching from the waist to a little below the knees, the upper part of the body remaining unclothed. This petticoat formerly consisted of deer or nutria skins sewn together, but since the present-day Choroti are poor hunters such skin loin-clothes are now rarely seen. According to Mr. Hunt, young Choroti girls have nowadays adopted the female dress of the Chiriguano (Avas), a kind of sleeveless, waistless gown caught at the shoulders with a couple of safety pins and known under the name of *tipoy*. At the time when I travelled in the Chaco these *tipoys* were only known to the women among the Bolivian Tobas, but not to the Choroti women, who always kept the upper part of their body uncovered and, in opposition to the Toba women, never showed any shame at displaying their bare breasts. A few necklaces, beads, or twisted feathers replace clothing on these nude parts of the body. Many of the personal ornaments of both men and women have the character of amulets or charms and will therefore be dealt with later on in connection with the religion of the natives.

Much the same may be said of the dress of the Mataco and the Tobas. Both of these tribes, and especially the Mataco, have been influenced

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M
342 against rain and wind. In these huts the Chaco Indian spends most of his time, sitting or lying on the ground or on the goat or sheep skin which forms his most important personal property. In the daytime, however, if the weather is fine, he prefers to stay outside the house engaged in various occupations or in eating or drinking, and in the summer time when no rain is falling and the temperature is high, he frequently even passes the night in the open air.

M
T Whereas primitive huts of this type are still customary among the Pilagá and other Argentine Tobas as well as among distant Mataco tribes,
342 the Mataco and Tobas on the Bolivian side nowadays make houses of
177 the same form as the whites, constructed of beams or balks with walls of cane and roofs of twigs and grass. Still these houses are so badly built that it is no rare thing to see a passing whirlwind sweep off the roofs and damage the walls.

C
M A Choroti or a Mataco village consists of six to twelve huts, generally
361 arranged in a circle round an open space which serves as a field for games and as a tethering place for the small flocks of sheep and goats possessed by the Indians. In the middle of this space there is usually a shady algaroba tree under which the men of the village assemble for deliberations and where the drinking-bouts take place. In building their settlements the Indians first of all make sure of the existence of water in the neighbourhood, be it the river Pilcomayo itself or one of those insignificant pools which are found here and there in the interior of the Chaco; secondly, the place must offer the necessary pasture for their flocks; and thirdly, the Indians always settle in the vicinity of a forest where they can find plenty of the wild fruits on which they to a great extent subsist, and the trees of which offer some protection against the burning rays of the sun during the hottest hours of the day. Further, being anti-social and shy, the Indians preferably chose for their settlements a place hidden away from the main track. Seldom or never are they found close to the banks of a river: generally one has to travel one or a few miles into the interior to find their villages.

C
M The villages of the Tobas and the Ashluslay are generally larger than
T those of the Choroti and the Mataco because the tribes are larger, but
361 they are arranged on the same principles. All Chaco tribes live in village communities — this is a feature which differentiates these tribes from those of the tropical virgin forests. The vast pampas regions, of course, favour the rise of larger societies, whereas in the great virgin forests the different families necessarily live scattered.

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The entrance to the village of the Choroti chief Estolhua (»Wild Turkey«).

A Choroti village deserted on account of an epidemic.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

361 181 In Chaco, both the primitive methods of constructing the houses and the peculiar character of the social life must to a great deal be explained by the fact that the Chaco Indians are nomads, unable to remain long in any one place and driven by resistless forces from one part of the country to another. Both their enemies, partly other Indian tribes, partly men of an altogether different race, and nature itself have always compelled them to live a nomadic life. It is a well known fact that the interior of the Chaco has for many centuries been a place of refuge for savage tribes driven to these inhospitable regions against their own will, under the pressure of superior forces. Still more do natural conditions force the Indians to wander: vast inundations at certain seasons, complete lack of water at others, and a variety of considerations arising from the necessity of obtaining a livelihood. When pasture or game is getting scarce in one place, the Indans change their abode and move to another place where it is easier to feed their flocks and to eke out their store of food by hunting. Agriculture, although practised to a very limited extent, may also at times compel the Chaco Indians to seek new dwelling-places. But — as Mr. Grubb rightly observes with special reference to the Lenguas of Paraguay — the Chaco Indian is often driven to forsake home and friends merely by his restless spirit, »the result of generations of hard and peculiar circumstances fixing a habit upon him which becomes second nature». The mere desire to wander and to get a change, or perhaps to see relatives and friends living in another part of the country, may induce an Indian to abandon his house and to move away with his wife and children and his whole property. Superstition works in the same direction. When a death occurs in a house, that house is as a general rule destroyed and burnt and if an epidemic causes several deaths within a short time, the whole village is destroyed and thereafter abandoned by its inhabitants. The Indians cannot persuade themselves to continue living in a place which is evidently haunted by evil spirits.

361 648 Distant savage Chaco tribes have been in the habit of abandoning and destroying their villages after they have been visited by white men. In some cases the Indians, as soon as they have got to know through their spies that a party of white men are approaching, have burnt their villages and retired to the interior, unexplored parts of the country. Both Nordenskiöld and other travellers have noted with astonishment this custom of the Chaco tribes. Its true motives are to be sought partly in a natural fear of the whites, of whom the Indians have frequently had sad experience, but above all in superstitious dread of the mysterious disease-spirits

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

which the strangers are believed to bring with them. The whole place, according to the idea of the Indians, has become infected as it were by the new-comers. Besides, the Indians understand that one party of white men is soon followed by another.

It is natural that the Chaco Indians should not care to bestow great labour on dwellings which in all probability will house them only for a short time, or in general, to arrange their life more comfortably in a place which they will probably soon be obliged to desert for ever. Apart from this, the Chaco Indian, who is perfectly suited to his environment, constructs his houses precisely in the way he thinks is most practical and of the material which is most easily obtainable. In the interior parts of the Chaco there are no large trees affording material for the construction of more substantial and durable houses. On the other hand, the scraggy trees and bushes in which the Chaco forests abound and the grassy plains provide building material in abundance, always within reach and excellent for the needs of the Indians. The beehive shaped huts of the primitive Chaco tribes therefore do not, as a certain ethnological school asserts, represent a type of human dwelling essentially characteristic of tribes at the lowest stages of cultural development, but must be wholly explained by the natural conditions. Like the Fuegians, who in their general culture are closely related to the Chaco tribes, the latter are not, on the whole, any lower in the scale of human development than most other tribes in tropical or sub-tropical South America, although nature may allow these to construct habitations of a higher type.

The same reasoning evidently accounts for the fact that the Pilcomayo tribes, although they are dependent on the river and to a great extent subsist by fishing, do not use canoes or craft of any kind. Whereas dug-outs of the kind customary among the South American Indians are commonly used by the Lenguas and other tribes of the river Paraguay, the Choroti, Mataco, Tobas, and Ashluslay have not even thought of constructing such vessels, obviously because the large timber trees from which canoes could be dug out are not obtainable in their country.

I have mentioned that agriculture is only practised by the Chaco tribes on a very limited scale, which of course is due to the dryness of the climate. Among all tribes the land is common property, and within this territory each family has a small plot of land allotted to it, or once taken possession of, which they are supposed to possess as long as they actually cultivate it. Pumpkin, *sandia* (water melon), and beans are the principal crops of the Choroti; maize and manioc are also cultivated, but the drought

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seldom allows them to reach maturity. Besides the drought, birds, ants, locusts, and rats often destroy the crops. The same fruits and cereals are cultivated by the Mataco and the Tobas in Bolivia, maize and manioc however with greater success than among the Choroti, since the climate there is more favourable. On the whole, the Chaco tribes are greatly dependent for their subsistence on the crops nature spontaneously gives them, and the great rôle that wild fruits like the algaroba, the chañar, the tusca, and a few others play in the economic life of these Indians has already been mentioned. It is mainly owing to these useful trees that the interior parts of the Chaco are habitable for people living in a state of nature.

The Bolivian Tobas, although they cultivate maize on a small scale, still get their main supply of this important cereal from the Avas in the north, with whom they carry on a sort of trade. Generally they get the maize in exchange for dried fish, which they store in considerable quantities during the summer season.

Fishing is the main occupation of the tribes living on the River Pilcomayo, and these Indians are therefore never seriously threatened by starvation. During the rainy season, when the river is swollen, fishing is often impossible; the proper season begins in April or May when the water is low and fish appear in abundance along the banks of the river. All Pilcomayo tribes use nets made of *caraguatá* fibres and of a peculiar triangular form, and since they have no canoes or vessels of any kind they always catch the fish by swimming and diving, in which they display remarkable skill. The Tobas, who are particularly skilled fishermen, use not only nets, but also, and I believe more commonly, bow and arrows, a method only occasionally practised by the Choroti and the Mataco. When the Indians have caught a fish they instantly kill it with a small club of palo santo if it is a large one, if it is of a smfaller kind simply by biting the head.

During a big fishing expedition the Indians, at any rate the Tobas, sometimes catch fish in enormous quantities. They preserve them by roasting, then store them in special shelters, formed of a roof made of reeds and palm-leaves resting on four poles. This dried fish forms an important article of exchange among the Tobas.

Next to fishing, hunting is the most important means of subsistence of the Chaco Indians, but in this respect also the Choroti and Mataco are inferior to the Tobas. Especially the Choroti seemed to me to be poor hunters. In the parts of the Chaco inhabited by these Indians game is scarce, and with their comparatively small bows and arrows they only

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rarely succeed in killing a tapir, a deer, or a wild pig. Besides, the deer is an animal of which the Choroti have a superstitious fear, and its flesh is never eaten by them; when they kill one, they only keep the hoofs, which are used as magical rattles, the leg-bones, of which instruments used for ceremonial blood-letting are made, and the skin which is used for different purposes. Of birds, as I have stated before, the ostrich is specially appreciated both on account of its flesh and its plumes, which play a great role as personal ornaments and to which magical power is ascribed. In hunting the ostrich the Choroti, like other Chaco tribes, avail themselves of the trick of binding palm leaves together and placing them on the head and shoulders so as to resemble a young tree. Disguised in this way, the Indians generally succeed in getting within easy range of the shy bird, and are thus able to bring it down with their arrows. Another trick of which the Indians often make use in hunting is that of imitating the cry of certain animals and birds by means of round wooden whistles, particularly invented for this purpose. With the same whistles, which are supposed to possess magic power, they also imitate the supposed whistling sound of the spirits, which are thereby frightened away.

The Tobas are much more skilled hunters than the Choroti and the Mataco, and, at least in Bolivia, the country inhabited by these Indians is comparatively rich in game. Thus tapirs, deer, and wild pigs, of which latter there are two varieties, are frequent in the forests, and the Tobas hunt them eagerly, using bows and arrows as well as lances as weapons. All Indians and particularly the Tobas, are expert in stalking animals; the latter are thereby aided by their dogs which are specially trained for the hunting of the wild pig. Even the jaguar and the puma are hunted by the Tobas with dogs.

Of domestic animals the Chaco Indians keep dogs, sheep and goats as well as fowls. [1] Horses were long ago introduced among the Tobas who

[1]) Nordenskiöld, when treating of the domestic animals of the Bolivian Indians in his *Ethnography of South America seen from Mojos in Bolivia*, p. 114, amongst other things mentions that in Mojos only the civilized Indians keep cattle, which have been introduced by the whites, and adds the following erroneous statements as regards the Chaco Indians: »In the Chaco, on the other hand, *even the independent Indians have cattle* which play an important part for them. *The Indians keep no sheep or goats.* I wish to point out that neither the Tobas nor the Choroti, nor the Mataco on the Pilcomayo keep cattle. On the other hand, sheep and goats are kept by *all* Pilcomayo tribes and, as far as I know, by all other Chaco Indians, except perhaps some savage tribes in the interior of the unknown Chaco.

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M T C 231

soon became skilled riders, but among the other Pilcomayo tribes they are rare. Before the Chaco Indian became acquainted with the white man, the dog was the only domestic animal known to him. These half-starved, fierce, and treacherous dogs are a real nuisance in the Mataco and the Choroti villages to the white traveller who has to stay among the Indians, because in their hunger they are always on the alert to rob him of edible things, among which they include not only his provisions, but also his saddlegear, boots, and other leather goods. Although the Mataco and the Choroti treat their numerous dogs badly and evidently have little use for them even as watches, yet in a way they regard them as members of the tribe. They never kill a dog, however old and wretched it may be, and when it dies they lament over it just as they lament over a fellow-tribesman. This curious practice is due to superstitious reasons, fear of the spirit of the dog. Like many other South American Indians, the natives of the Chaco believe that the souls of their dead tribesmen may reincarnate themselves in the dogs.

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Only the Tobas, who are culturally superior to the rest of the Pilcomayo tribes, feed their dogs properly and have real use for them both in hunting and as watchdogs. But even these dogs are of uncertain breed and by nature so savage that for my own part I failed in my attempts to train them according to European methods.

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These general remarks on the material culture of the Pilcomayo tribes may suffice as a basis for the following description of their social customs and their intellectual culture. I shall repeatedly have occasion to touch upon the ergology of the Indians in describing their magical ornaments and amulets, as well as various objects used at religious ceremonies.

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Chorotí Indians fishing in the Pilcomayo.
An old man, wading in the river and beating the water with a stick, is driving the fish towards the fishermen, who stand ready to catch them with their nets.

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Photo W. Hansen.

Young Toba Indians, armed with bows and arrows, hunting in the forest.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112
Choroti SK6

SOCIAL LIFE

CHAPTER III.

M T C 619

Social organization. Chiefs.

The social organization among all tribes of the Pilcomayo is fundamentally the same, although the Tobas represent a more highly developed type of society than the Choroti, Mataco, and Ashluslay. Among all of them the »tribe» is a fairly loose social unit, being simply composed by families related to one another by blood. A clan organization in the strict sense of the word does not exist among the Chaco Indians [1]) and totemism is entirely unknown, although the beginnings of a totemistic system may be traced among the Tobas. The appellation »Ostrich-men» given to the Tobas by some of their neighbours, and certain ideas held of this bird by the Indians themselves undoubtedly point in this direction.

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As to the *Choroti*, I have already mentioned that they are split up into three principal sub-tribes, each occupying a special territory within the tract which these Indians regard as belonging exclusively to themselves. Although the different sub-tribes feel themselves, in a general way, parts of the same tribal unit, the Choroti people (*Jóhuaha*), there is not much communication between them and, as I have stated before, the relation between the Choroti of the Pilcomayo and the Choroti living in the interior is almost one of antagonism. Within the sub-tribes, again, the feeling of blood-relationship is strong. Such a sub-tribe consists of a number of village communities, each composed of a few families closely related to one another. As a rule each village has its

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chief, *anétsiās*, and over the whole sub-tribe there is even a »great chief».

[1]) When in the following pages I sometimes use the word »clan», this term has merely reference to the »sub-tribes», by which I simply mean a number of families recognizing consanguinity. The chief reason why the »sub-tribes» of the Chaco Indians cannot be called »clans» proper is that they are not exogamous.

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anétsiãs vuh, exerting a certain social influence. Chieftainship however, among the Choroti is rather nominal than real; even the »great chief» is in fact destitute of power, although in relation to other tribes and to the whites he exercises certain representative functions. Thus when commissions from the sugar factories arrived in the Chaco to negotiate about the sending of Indian labourers to northern Argentine, they had to deal with the chiefs, who through the medium of interpreters gave them answers on behalf of their people. But even the »great chiefs» cannot compel anybody to work, nor can they interfere with the private affairs of the families, in which the father and the mother have full liberty of action. Still more imaginary is the power of the village chief, who is nothing but a *pater familias* enjoying a certain esteem. He cannot command anybody, but merely represents his village community in relation to outsiders, just as the »great chief» represents the whole sub-tribe.

The dignity of chief is not hereditary among the Choroti, nor apparently among the Mataco. When the chief dies, the oldest family fathers of the community assemble under the big algaroba tree which serves as a club-house and elect a new chief, the election taking place in connection with a drinking-feast.

Old men are generally held in great esteem, and the chiefs are generally, although not invariably, men of advanced age. Among the Choroti, old men are held in particular esteem for superstitious reasons, since they are believed to be changed, after death, into evil spirits. As we shall see later on in the chapter on the religion of the Indians, the spirits of the Choroti are believed to appear in the shape of old men. Since the natural magical power of the human body is increased with advancing age, it is natural that old people are feared, but the supernatural halo which surrounds them of course at the same time is apt to give them social influence. Above all their supposed connection with the spirits makes them qualified to exercise religious functions. Independent of any particular initiation, every old man is credited with the power of conjuring the spirits and is thus always more or less a sorcerer. If therefore we wish to speak of a social distinction among the Choroti, we may say that the sorcerers, called *ayieu*, are the only members of the Choroti society who in a certain sense form a class of their own or mark the beginnings of a social differentiation. Since, however, every old man is more or less expert in the act of magic and considered able to handle the rattle gourd (*pelite*) or the drum (*usyuk*), the *ayieu* of the Choroti cannot be called professional sorcerers in the strict sense of the word.

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Social classes do not exist among the Choroti, nor any distinction between rich and poor. All members of this primitive society are equally rich or equally poor and, owing to the great social sympathy which unites them, property is in practice to a great extent common to all. The relative communism or socialism existing among the lowest Chaco tribes will be touched upon later. C 565

The social organization of the *Mataco* was originally the same as that of the Choroti, but the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia have in this as in other respects been considerably influenced by the Tobas and probably also by the Avas, and therefore at present stand socially higher than the primitive Choroti. As to the *Tobas*, in their social organization they are much superior to the Choroti, although their society is essentially founded on the same principles. Even among the Tobas the »tribe» is in its essence only a group of families united by the tie of blood-relationship. But whereas among the Choroti the chief is nothing but a respected family father without real power, the Toba chief, called *alyánek*, seems to exercise a considerable authority, at least in time of war. Although the Tobas have not been conquerors in the same sense as the Avas, they have always been a warlike race of Indians, and such peoples generally have more strongly organized societies than those who have never or only rarely tried their strength in fighting against enemies and have not grown accustomed to the order and discipline which war requires. M 177 T 619 622 181

Social ranks and classes in the strict sense of the words do not exist among the Tobas, just as they are unknown to the Avas; but we can trace the germ of a nobility in the fact that the sons and descendants of a great cacique or war chief generally enjoy greater esteem than other members of the society. The chiefs have power to command, especially in times of war, when their orders are unfailingly obeyed. They distingush themselves from the rest of their people by having several wives and often by being richer, since of the spoils taken in war the main part is allotted to them. Formerly they also distingushed themselves externally from other men by a peculiar arrangement of the hair. According to the Catholic missionaries Dobrizhoffer and Charlevoix, [1]) all Guaycurú tribes used to pluck out the hair from the forehead to the crown of the head so that the forepart was bald. This arrangement, which had magic significance, was called *nalemrá*, and was the reason why the Tobas were called by the Spaniards T 565 554 622 T 302 622

[1]) Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, II. 17. Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, I. 135.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco
Toba S/12

302 622 Frentones. But Dobrizhoffer adds that among the Abipones — who were only a particular Toba tribe — the *nalemrá* of a chief was made much larger than that of other people, a broad bald path being made from the forehead to the back of the head. These distinguishing marks are unknown to the present day Toba chiefs.

622 The dignity of the chief is as a rule hereditary; the eldest son of a cacique generally succeeds his father as leader of the tribe, except when he is born of a woman whom the chief has divorced. But although a Toba may inherit the chieftainship from his father, he must always display certain prominent qualities to be approved of by his people. These qualities are valour, skill, and experience in making war, as well as intelligence and eloquence. The warlike qualities, of course, are most appreciated. 623 888 If a chief falls short in this respect and shows himself useless and cowardly in a war, he is removed by his people, or more strictly speaking, by the Council of the Eldest, in spite of all the merits which his father may have possessed.

622 701 Since the ordinary chiefs, who receive their rank by inheritance, are often too old and decrepit to serve as successful leaders in a war, extraordinary chiefs are frequently elected in addition to them for a war expedition. These are generally younger men who have distinguished themselves in battle. If the war has been successfully carried out and the young man has proved worthy of his position, he may, having previously been only a temporary leader, be appointed a permanent chief at the great feast with which a victory is celebrated.

623 888 The Council of the Eldest just mentioned shows in its way the developed organization of the Toba society. This Council consists of the eldest men from each sub-tribe and is therefore called *Eakachi* (»The Old Ones«). One of its function is to watch the conduct and activity of the chiefs and to confirm their election. Now it is customary among all Chaco tribes that the eldest men or the heads of the different families assemble to deliberate the common affairs of the tribe, but it is only among the Tobas that these old family fathers form an organized body with 622 623 definite functions. If a chief shows himself cowardly or treats his people badly, the Council of the Eakachi penalise him and remove him from the leadership. Thus the great chief Taycolique had, just at the time when I arrived at the Pilcomayo, been removed from his position as chief [273] because, as the Tobas told me, he was addicted to drunkenness and when drunk had repeatedly committed outrages against, and even killed, some of his own people. Still Taycolique to a remarkable degree possessed the

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Choroti Indians outside their house.

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The open space in the middle of the Choroti village, with a drum placed to the left.

The woman in the middle has a leather strap tied round the chest as a sort of charm against evil spirits.

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A Choroti settlement in the neighbourhood of Fort Guachalla. Angry dogs are the first to welcome the visitor.

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The old Choroti chief Atamo and his relations.
The scene to the right illustrates the Indian custom of louse-eating.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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very qualities which the Indians appreciate in their leaders. He was valiant, cunning, and eloquent, and, being a great warrior, had provided his people with firearms which made the Tobas superior in war to all other Chaco tribes and dangerous enemies even to the whites.

The Eakachi, as is customary in the Chaco, hold their assemblies under a shady algaroba tree, generally at the time of the new moon. Besides watching the conduct of their chiefs, they have to deliberate questions of war and peace and to appoint an extraordinary chief when an attack against an enemy is planned. In addition, they act as judges or arbitrators in quarrels and fights between the men.

A social feature characteristic of all Chaco tribes is the relative matriarchy or »mother-right» prevailing among them. Descent is traced through the female, the child being supposed to belong to the mother's, and not to the father's, tribe or clan. Closely connected with this idea is the custom prevailing among most matriarchal peoples, that when a man marries, he stays with his wife's family, becoming a member of her clan. All these features are found among the Pilcomayo tribes, but particularly among the *Choroti* where »mother-right» has developed into real mother-rule. Thus in those parts of the Choroti country where they are neighbours with other tribes and intermarriage takes place, it is the rule that if the woman is of the Choroti tribe the children become members of that tribe, whereas, if a Choroti man marries a woman of another tribe, he himself and the children become members of that tribe. This was particularly noticeable in regard to the Ashluslay in the South with whom the Choroti frequently intermarry. Thus the »great chief» of the Choroti living near the fort Guachalla, the old Atamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but his mother being a Choroti woman he had himself become a Choroti.

The »mother-right» of the Choroti is not carried to such an extreme that for instance the maternal uncle or some other relative on the mother's side is regarded as the guardian of the children. Among the Choroti both parents are the guardians of the child although, as in other matters, the mother has always more to say. Nor does it imply that parentage is wholly attributed to the mother. On the contrary, the custom of couvade, as it is observed by the Choroti, shows that this maternal people is well aware of the father's great rôle in the procreation of children. The »mother-right» of the Choroti and of other Chaco tribes is in fact only a secondary phenomenon, evidently dependent on the social conditions which have developed among the tribes in this country, and which in their turn

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C 562 are due — at least in part — to geographical causes. As to the Choroti, it is to be noticed that among them the women in general have great social importance, to such an extent in fact, that we may speak of a real gynaecocracy. This is in the first place due to the numerical disproportion between the sexes which, at least at present, exists in this tribe. The causes of this phenomenon are difficult to assign; there is for instance, no general custom of killing new-born female children which would account for it. Infanticide is indeed practised in the case of monstrous children and twins, but it has reference to male children as well as to female. Female children are appreciated perhaps more than male children, for the very reason that women are so few in the Choroti society. Whatever the real cause of the numerical paucity of the women, it is this fact which explains their social influence. Besides this, we have to take into consideration the strict division of labour between the sexes existing among the Indians. For instance, sowing and planting, the carrying of fuel, the gathering of wild fruits, the brewing of intoxicating drinks, and a good deal of other home industries are wholly or chiefly incumbent on the women. This to the Indians means that no man *can* successfully do work which custom prescribes shall be done by a woman. A consequence of this is that particular importance is ascribed to female work as such and that women in general are held in great esteem. From this point of view we must also explain the custom that a man who marries must go and live with his wife's family. It is mainly due to the reluctance of her parents to separate from her on account of the work she performs. Among the Choroti no compensation is given for a bride, because no bargaining of any kind whatever takes place between the members of the tribes. Instead of that, custom prescribes that the young husband shall render services to her parents, which is only possible if he stays with the family of his spouse for a longer or shorter time. In this way matrilocal marriage in the Choroti and other Chaco tribes seems to me to have originated, although the Choroti at any rate are not now aware of these services being really obligatory and a form of compensation for the wife. Marriage among them appears now as a wholly private affair based upon the voluntary agreement of both parties. But where a matrilocal marriage has developed, the children are naturally looked upon as belonging in the first place to the mother and to her tribe or clan, whereas the husband's importance as a family father is only secondary.

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M 562 584 The same kind of »mother-right» and gynaecocracy also prevails, or prevailed formerly, among the *Mataco* Indians who, for instance, allow

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A settlement of Mataco Indians. Mataco-Noctenes. Bolivia.

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A Mataco Indian dressed in a caraguata shirt.

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the girl to take the first step towards contracting marriage, just as is the case with the Choroti. Similarly the *Tobas* trace descent through the female, but social conditions in the Toba society are more highly differentiated and the influence of the women is limited accordingly. The social position of the Indian woman and the characteristic liberty given her by custom appears in matters of love and marriage, a topic dealt with in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER IV.

Courtship and marriage.

A salient feature in the social life of all Chaco tribes, and one in which they differ considerably from the tribes whom I learned to know in tropical South America, is the great sexual liberty allowed to young people before marriage. As soon as a girl has passed her first menstruation she is considered free to choose for herself occasional lovers, and generally she does not delay in making use of this right. This free sexual life is particularly indulged in during the algaroba season, in connection with the feasts and dances which then take place. The girls avoid the natural consequences of this sexual license by abortion or infanticide, customs which are also approved by the social morality of the Chaco Indians. Having enjoyed this free life for some years, the girl ultimately decides to marry, and then as a rule becomes a faithful wife as long as the husband does not himself neglect his duties towards her. This general state of things is met with all along the Pilcomayo, although customs of course differ to some extent in different tribes. I shall first relate the customs practised among the Choroti in courtship and marriage.

The *Choroti* are a strictly monogamous people. During my stay among the different Choroti tribes I never found a single case of polygamy, and I was moreover able to confirm that polygamy is strongly disapproved of by custom and the social morality of the people. It is first of all rendered impossible by the jealousy of the women who, as I have mentioned before, have a decisive influence in matters of love and take the first step towards contracting marriage.

Courtship therefore among the Choroti assumes rather a peculiar form, inasmuch as the girls play the active, and the young men the passive part. Marriages are as a rule contracted during the algaroba season from November to March, when there is a good supply of food in the villages and

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco

Choroti SK6

584 the Indians live a happy and joyous life. We may therefore say that this is the proper »pairing-season» of the Chaco tribes, and particularly of the Choroti. At other times of the year, when fruit becomes scarce and life to the Indians is often a hard struggle for existence, they are little inclined 584 for merry-making, love, and marriage. In October, when the very nutri- tive chañar fruit ripens, the Chaco Indian is, as it were, revived, and a 535 few weeks later, when the algaroba and the tusca trees give their much 836 appreciated fruit, his life is at its gayest, manifesting itself of course in his sexual interests also. Those young men and women who want to be married then wander about from one village to the other, where dances take place. In each village three dances, those called *Jóhlōki*, *Ahlénta*, and *Avúshe*, are performed on four successive evenings. Free sexual intercourse is connected with these dances, and the girls play an important rôle in them although they do not actively take part in the entertainment. The dances of the Chaco Indians are mainly entertainments of the men. The girls generally content themselves with merely looking at the dancing youths, making their choice among them. Incidentally however a girl may be seen dancing for a while behind a man whom she particularly likes with her hands laid upon his shoulders, and after the dance she takes him away and keeps him for that night. This is something one may notice after each dance, and thus the Choroti dances during the »season» often have the character of real sexual orgies. The last *Avúshe*-dance on the fourth evening is, however, supposed to be decisive as far as marriage is concerned; those girls who have found the men whom they want to marry then keep them not only for the night, but for ever. The young man is taken to the village and house of the girl, where he stays as her husband, becoming a member of his wife's family.

584 The *Avúshe* may therefore be called the proper courtship and marriage 535 dance of the Choroti. The very name of the dance is interesting from this point of view. The Choroti word *avúshe* means 'vulture' — not the black vulture, but another kind common in the Chaco[1]) — and the name therefore may be translated as »the Vulture-dance». The idea of the Indians seems to be that just as the vultures jump and dance round their prey, the dead animal, so the Choroti men in the *Avúshe* dance jump round the girls trying to »conquer» them. The girls at this dance, it should be understood, stand within the ring formed by the dancing men. All the young men who take part in the dance are dressed in their best clothes

[1]) *Polyborus vulgaris.*

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco

Choroti SK 6

and ornaments, wearing many-coloured mantles, necklaces, ear-tubes, big ostrich plumes on the head, and having the face painted. The men form a circle round the girls with arms interlaced round each others' waists. The dance chiefly consists in jumping with both feet at once and stamping hard upon the ground to the measure of a very noisy but monotonous chant. The ceremony is called *nissammaha aséhne*, »to hurry on the girls». The expression »to hurry on» (*nissammaha*), as we shall find later, is used by the Chaco Indians in many cases where there is a question of magically influencing the course of nature for good and useful ends. Just as the Indians believe they can hurry on or promote the growth of the fruit by influencing the tree spirits and by exorcising the evil demons who are trying to blight them, so they »hurry on» the girls in the sense that by the dancing and chanting the latter are prompted to make a definitive choice of a husband, whereas at the same time evil spirits are kept away from them. Courtship and marriage, it should be noted, are of those numerous critical occasions in human life when malignant supernatural powers are believed to be more than otherwise on the alert to do harm and spoil the good designs of men, and as usual the weaker sex is supposed to be particularly exposed to them. The courting dance *Avúshe* is thus in part held with the intention of keeping off this invisible molestation, so that the girl's choice of a consort for life may take place under good auspices.

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A man who is not taken away from the dance by a girl has no possibility of getting either a temporary paramour or a wife. The matter wholly depends on the girls, and there are of course always men who for one reason or another are despised. I sometimes noticed such unfortunate lovers at the Choroti dances. Their experience had led them not to take part in the dances; they were sitting in a hut close by, eagerly shaking the rattle gourd (*pelite*), as they said, »to hurry on the girls» and thus possibly to have better luck in the future. Since the women are much fewer in number than the men, it is necessary that some men are obliged to remain bachelors all their lives. These men were ridiculed not only by the women but also by their more fortunate brethren. On the other hand, there are no unmarried women, and even widows soon remarry unless they are very old.

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The men may try to attract the girls at the dances by their beautiful ostrich plumes, necklaces, and other ornaments, but these means of attraction certainly only play a subordinate part. The Choroti woman evidently expects something more of a man whom she thinks of marrying

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

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or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

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Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelite*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekaflitse sima*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

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Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

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Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

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When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

2: Karsten, E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
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them. The aim of the dance is partly to protect the former against supernatural dangers, an idea generally associated with the Indian ring-dances. But in addition, it seems to have special reference to marriage, for it is supposed in some mysterious way to influence the marriage candidates favourably. On this particular point, however, I did not receive further information from the Indians.

Lastly, we have to consider the marriage customs of the *Tobas*. The Tobas are generally monogamous for the simple reason that it is difficult for an ordinary man to maintain several wives and a large family, but there are exceptions to this rule. Polygamy is, however, allowed by custom, and if a Toba considers himself rich enough and has an opportunity of getting wives, it is of no rare occurrence that he marries two, three, or more women, who generally live in different villages owing to the jealousy they entertain for each other. This kind of polygamy is especially found among the great chiefs. Thus the famous cacique Taycolique has had in all ten wives. One has died, he has divorced five, and at the time of my stay among the Tobas he had four wives. Such great chiefs frequently separate themselves from their wives only for the sake of marrying some younger and prettier woman. The children of a divorced wife have not the same rights as the children of her supplanter, and if the eldest son is born of such a wife he cannot become chief on the death of his father; in this case the eldest son of the new wife will inherit the chieftainship. The father, however, does not break completely with the children of a divorced wife if they are adult, but maintains relations with them, and they sometimes visit their father.

Among the Tobas, as among most Chaco tribes, pre-nuptial chastity is almost unknown, great sexual liberty being allowed both boys and girls before marriage. As soon as a girl is marriageable, that is, has passed her first menstruation, she may choose casual lovers, and generally she does not fail to make use of her freedoom. Although in some parts of the country, the sexual liberty of the Toba girls seems to have degenerated into prostitution, there is no doubt that the social morality of the people has approved of this custom since ancient times. The young men and women meet at the dances, some of which, among the Tobas as among the Choroti, are intimately connected with the sexual life. The girls cannot, however, as among the Choroti, take the initiative in contracting marriage.

When a Toba man has found a girl whom he likes and wants for his

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco
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584 wife, he asks her hand of her mother.[1]) The latter, having consulted her daughter, may accept or refuse the proposal. Frequently it is difficult for the suitor to get the girl he desires. He has to bargain for her repeatedly, and in order to make himself agreeable to his future parents-in-law and at the same time show his ability to maintain a family he brings them fish, game, and other presents. Now, although these presents are not meant to be a payment for the bride, but proofs of the suitor's ability to fulfil his duties as a family man, the custom has undoubtedly a tendency to develop into a system of purchasing the wife. Still marriage by pur-
583 chase in the proper sense of the word is unknown to the Chaco tribes. On the other hand, even marriage by capture occurs among the Tobas as a method of acquiring wives, and not merely in connection with war. It may in some cases happen that the suitor, without asking the parents for the girl, simply steals her or elopes with her to another part of the country, where he will keep her as his wife. This of course is particularly the case when the parents of the girl deny their consent to the marriage.

585 If the proposal is accepted, marriage takes place without many cere-
535 monies. The most important is the dance *Nahotti* which answers to the Mataco *Nahútsuk* and which takes place the first night after a marriage has been arranged. The dancing boys and girls form a ring round the newly-married couple, who sit close to a big fire without taking part
573 in the dance. The incident is also celebrated with the usual drinking-feast, algaroba beer (*maplyi*) being drunk by the men in great quantities.

584 Formerly the trials to which a suitor had to submit in order to win the girl he wanted for his wife were much more severe, as may be inferred from an account by Father Cardús. The custom which he describes is of so much interest that I may quote it at length.

»As soon as a young man considers that he has sufficient power and titles to marry, he simply addresses the parents of the girl he wants for his wife and asks for her hand. If the parents accept the proposal they construct, outside the house, a small hut of straw with a small entrance and a hole in the middle. They put the girl into the hut and bring her some food at certain hours, and she is not allowed to go out except for the most urgent necessities. The young man, having previously made a cincture of the bones of various animals killed by him, hangs it round his waist and places himself outside the hut. He starts to beat a sort of

[1]) According to other information which I received, the suitor has for this purpose to address *both* parents.

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Toba SI12

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A village of the Argentine Tobas.
The houses are of the same primitive type as among the Choroti.

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Photo W. Hansen.

A Toba family outside its dwelling. Argentine Chaco.
In the middle the usual lousing-scene.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco
Toba SI 12

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A Toba chief of the Argentine Chaco.
Notice the leather strap tied round his breast.

Photo W. Hansen.

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Photo W. Hansen.
A Toba woman with her child.

Photo W. Hansen.
A Toba man from the Argentine Chaco.

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small drum which they call *pimpis*, moving the body up and down and from one side to the other, in order that the bones which he wears round the waist may make a noise, at the same time chanting in a low voice a chant customary among them in such cases. The girl sits inside, looking through a hole at her future husband and listening to his chant. The young man has to continue this performance regularly, for a period up to eight days, standing chanting, beating the drum and moving his body, whether it is cold or hot, whether it is raining or the sun is broiling, he being allowed to interrupt the performance only for the most urgent needs. If he rests too much or gets tired, above all if he does not please the parents of the girl, they may tell him that he is not good enough to marry their daughter. — On the other hand, if the parents are pleased with him it does not matter if he be a little lazy, and in such cases the mother of the girl, as if to encourage him to endurance, may, on the fourth or fifth day, plant one or two poles close to the place where he stands, putting a little straw or some branches upon them as shelter during the hottest hours of the day, or when it is raining. Such an attention is a expression of the affection which the suitor's future parents-in-law feel for him and at the same time a guarantee that, as soon as the performance prescribed by custom is finished, his wishes will be fulfilled.[1])

This custom, which no longer prevails among the Bolivian Tobas, is interesting as revealing both the religious and the social significance of marriage among the Indians. The marriage candidate, as pointed out, has always to show his strength and endurance as well as his ability to support the future family; the cincture made of the bones of animals killed by him which he wears round the waist, and the chant continued for several days and nights are natural demonstrations of these qualities. But marriage has at the same time a religious significance; on an occasion like this, which decides the whole future of two people, the evil spirits are always on the alert to frustrate the good designs of men. The suitor, with the aid of his drum, his rattling cincture, and his chant, tries to keep away the demons who want to attack and harm his future wife. Similarly, the dance *Nakotti*, performed in the night, and the drinking-bout, as we shall see later on, have a religious or ceremonial character.

In all cases where the marriage arrangement has been made in a friendly manner, the newly-married man goes to live in the house of his parents-in-law, becoming a member of his wife's family. The children

[1]) Cardus, op. cit. pp. 283 sqq.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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T 591 also belong to the mother's tribe or clan. Although the Tobas have thus the maternal system of descent, this mother-right, as already pointed out, does not amount to real matriarchy or mother-rule, as among the Choroti.

C 582 As to restrictions in contracting marriage, there seems to exist among most tribes a native law prohibiting unions between very near blood-relations. Among the Choroti, and probably the Ashluslay and Mataco, first cousins are not allowed to marry. The Choroti only gave me the explanation that cousins are alike brother and sister; marriages between them would be looked upon with the same horror as if a brother and a sister married each other. Of the Tobas I was told that they have no objection T 582 to cousins marrying each other. Still, considering the similarity of the social customs and institutions of the Chaco tribes, I doubt whether the same restriction as to cousin-marriage which exists among the lower tribes has not formerly existed among the Tobas also. — Since the families belonging to the same village community are generally closely related to each M 582 other, marriages do not as a rule take place between persons of the 621 same village. On the other hand, marriages are generally, although not exclusively, contracted between persons belonging to different village communities of the same sub-tribe. The outer circle within which marriage is allowed is very wide. The Chaco Indians have no objections to marrying women of foreign tribes, and wars are often waged for the very purpose of stealing young women who are afterwards married by the victors.

C M T 586 Divorce occurs in all Chaco tribes, although more frequently among the Tobas than among the primitive Choroti and Mataco. A Toba, Mataco, or Choroti man may leave his wife merely for the sake of marrying a younger and prettier one, since conjugal fidelity is not a prominent virtue of married men in the Chaco. Still, such cases are rather exceptional in Choroti society. The very fewness of the women and the difficulty of getting a new wife instead of the one divorced naturally makes divorce difficult as far as it depends on the man. In all the tribes, on the other hand, a woman may leave her husband if he proves unfaithful, if he treats her badly, or if he is lazy and unable to support her. Of the Toba women particularly I noticed that they left their husbands for very trifling reasons. Unfaithfulness on the part of married women seemed to me to be a common thing among the Tobas, but this may in part be a consequence of the unfavourable influence which the contact with civilization has exerted upon the social morality of these Indians. As for the husband, adultery

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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casually committed with another man rarely caused him to divorce his wife; divorce took place only when she continued to maintain illicit relations with other men. The fact that among the Tobas polygamy is sanctioned by custom seems to have a tendency to make matrimonial unions looser than among the monogamous Choroti. But in all tribes the rule is that marriage lasts for life.

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If the women in general seemed to be more faithful in marriage than the men, this was in part due to the fact that in the former jealousy was

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Young Toba woman. Bolivian Chaco.

a very prominent quality. After the Choroti girl has made her choice of a partner, she faithfully keeps to him and jealously watches his conduct towards other women. If she suspects him of being unfaithful, she will soon remind him of his duty towards his own wife. If she discovers him in illicit practices, for instance in another man's house, or taking part in the dances, she at once seizes him by the hair and drags him to his own home. This is in fact the way in which the Choroti women generally treat their unfaithful husbands, that is to say, by seizing them by the long hair and taking them home. I never noticed that a man treated in this somewhat rough way made any resistance. The submissive attitude of

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the men in such cases showed to what extent the women dominate the home life of the Choroti. There is not, among these Indians, any punishment for adultery as such, for the very reason that punishment in any form is unknown within the tribe. — Among the Tobas again a man may beat his wife if she commits adultery.

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On the other hand, if a Choroti woman gets to know of a female rival, the result will in all probability be a fight between the two women, who use a sort of boxing glove of hide, or small daggers consisting of the legbone of a deer pointed at the end. The same custom is followed by the Mataco and the Toba women, in whom jealousy is likewise a prominent quality. Among the Tobas particularly, fights between girls who have fallen in love with the same man are of frequent occurrence. Similarly, if a married woman gets to know that her husband maintains illicit relations with another woman, the consequence is in most cases a fight between the legitimate wife and the rival, and these fights are not seldom sanguinary. The one even tries to kill the other which, of course, she very seldom succeeds in doing. Such fights are continued for several hours, often for a whole night, during which the two enraged women beat each other with the hands, scratch each other with the nails, or wound each other with big cactus thorns which they have tied at the wrists.

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Chapter V.

Position of the women. Division of labour.

The influential position of the women among the Chaco Indians has already been touched upon. The facts mentioned as to the »mother-right» prevailing among these Indians, the right of the Choroti and Mataco women to propose marriage, etc. give us to understand that the social position of the Chaco woman is by no means that of an oppressed slave, as it has sometimes been described by superficial observers. Even the Tobas, in spite of comparatively frequent divorce, hold their women in high esteem, as may indeed be inferred from one of their myths about the origin of the women. It is therefore impossible to subscribe to the opinion expressed by Campos with special reference to the Tobas when he says that »the women, as has been stated by all, are the yoke-carriers of the house; they are the slaves and not the comrades of the men». Only a passing traveller, who has not had an opportunity to study the social conditions of the natives properly, can arrive at such an opinion. It is true that matrimonial relations are not as ideal among the Tobas as among the Choroti, where women have the right to choose husbands and wholly dominate the family life. Among the Tobas it may happen — as would never happen among the Choroti — that a husband beats his wife, either because he is bad himself or because she has proved unfaithful and tried his patience too much by her jealousy; but such cases are rather exceptions than the rule; generally the Toba husband treats his wife with kindness and affection.

The division of labour between the sexes prevailing in the Chaco as in other parts of South America, easily gives a superficial observer the impression that the women are treated by the men as inferior and subjugated beings. The home industries, especially spinning, weaving, and pottery-making, are wholly in the hands of the women. They not only have to do

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462 the general domestic work, but in particular to collect and carry home wild roots and fruit from the forest as well as fire-wood and water. Thus every afternoon one can see the women returning home laden with heavy burdens of fuel or of algaroba or other fruits, carried in large net-bags. The hardest workers in all tribes are the older women. At any rate I noticed that the younger married Toba women shunned the heaviest work, for instance the carrying of fuel, leaving this to the older women of the family. As to agriculture, both sexes take part in it, but the men do the rough work, felling the trees and clearing the ground. The domestic animals, that is to say, the goats, sheep and fowls, are left to the care of the women. The men, in addition to the rough work they perform in agriculture, reckon fishing and hunting as their main occupations. the Toba men being also frequently occupied in warfare, which is a real
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[825] profession among these Indians. The armadillo, which is regarded by the Tobas as a »female» animal, is the only game caught by the women.

This division of labour is very strictly observed. It is not an accidental institution, nor due to the desire of the men to oppress the weaker members of society and to compel them to do such kinds of work as they do not, for one reason or another, like themselves. It is, as it were, founded upon the nature of things and in some cases connected with the animistic ideas of the natives. A man would be ashamed to do work which according to custom is incumbent on the women, and similarly a woman would seem ridiculous did she perform a man's work. A European who notices for instance a Choroti family when about to move, and sees the wife laden with an enormous burden of things belonging to the family, and perhaps a sucking child in addition, whereas her husband goes free and disengaged, only carriyng his bow and arrows, might easily arrive at the conclusion that the Choroti husband treats his wife like a slave; but the conclusion would nevertheless be wrong. The husband must have his hands free among other things to be able to defend the family with his weapons against venomous snakes or other dangers threatening it on the way, or to hunt. The women themselves look upon this state of things as
M being perfectly natural.

462 The industry which is characteristic of the Indian woman in the
562 Chaco as elsewhere in South America is thus by no means an expression of her inferior social position. The work she does is not compulsory but voluntary and must be wholly explained by the conditions of life which have developed among the Indians. Mr. Grubb, who during his long stay among the Chaco Indians acquired a perfect knowledge of their

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Bolivian Tobas working outside their house.

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A long-houses in a Toba village in the Bolivian Chaco. On the open space a woman is grinding maize.

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Photo W. Hansson.

Toba Indian catching fish with their nets in a lagoon. Argentine Chaco.

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Photo W. Hansson.

A Toba youth shooting fish with bow and arrow.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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psychology, is quite right when he points out that in reality the men do their fair share of the work, although it is not seen to such advantage as that of the women. Thus fishing and hunting which are the chief occupations of the men are by no means a pastime or recreation, but a serious, onerous, and often dangerous undertaking; and the same of course, in a still higher degree, holds true of warfare.

As to the Toba woman, her independent and influential position appears in its way from the right she possesses to decide about the future husband of her daughter; as we have seen, the mother's consent is particularly required. The women also show their influence when raids against other tribes are planned, exciting the passions and revengefulness of the men. And in all tribes the women serve as permanent and self-elected arbitrators. When quarrels arise at the drinking-feasts, which is not unfrequently the case, and threaten to develop into sanguinary fights, it is the women that allay the agitated feelings and separate the fighters, thus preventing more serious calamities.

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Chapter VI.

Birth customs.

M 843 Various customs are practised at the birth of a child, many of which are of a religious significance, their aim being to protect the new-born child and its mother against supernatural dangers. Both the ideas and the practices to which they give rise are much the same among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Tobas. As soon as the Indian woman feels herself to be pregnant she begins to observe certain rules with regard to her diet. She generally abstains from eating meat, contenting herself with maize T [843] and certain leaves. The Toba women during this time take particular care not to eat fish, and with other kinds of animal food she is cautious. Thus if she eats the paunch or the intestines of a cow she will fall ill and birth will be rendered more difficult. When the child arrives, it is washed M in water, the umbilical cord is cut off with a snail's shell and guarded for 844 some time with great care. If the cord were cut off with a knife, the child, it is believed, would soon die. No iron instrument must come in contact with the new-born babe. Again, the navel-string cut off must be guarded until the navel wound is perfectly healed. If it is thrown away prematurely, this would be the same as throwing away the life of the child, which would die in consequence. The umbilical cord, according to the idea of M the Indians, remains in some mysterious connection with the new-born [171] child. These ideas are found among all Pilcomayo tribes, but they seem to be common to all South American Indians living in a state of nature.

The rites and ceremonies taking place after the little one has arrived all depend on the belief of the Indians that there is a very intimate connection between the child and its mother, and that both of them are badly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits. Fully to understand them and the behaviour of the woman in child-bed we must first of all take into consideration that the Indian woman in general bears children with great

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)193? SI7 Mataco SI7

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ease, without suffering much pain. From the point of view of the savage it is of special importance that this should be so. As the *Choroti* explained the matter to me: if at the birth the woman is ill, this is due to her being possessed by an evil spirit, and the demon, owing to the close connection between mother and child, will also take possession of the latter causing it to fall ill and die. Hence the weakness and sickness from which possibly she is suffering must be concealed and reasoned away. The Choroti have a stereotyped phrase to express this: *lasīhe īse lóuet = lahse ihe, eis lóuet*, that is: »when the child is born, the mother is well». As a matter of fact, a few hours after the delivery the Choroti woman is seen to move about doing some small tasks in the house, fetching water, preparing food, and so on. In short, she acts as if she were quite hearty, thus deceiving herself, her relatives, and the evil spirits. But the curious thing is that among the Choroti the *father* of the child, seemingly instead of the mother, lies in bed, looks weak, fasts, and is attended by the women, in short, behaves just as if he were the person who had given birth to the child and were suffering pains. The precaution which the woman shares with her husband, in addition to abstaining from hard work, is that she has to diet. Like him she avoids meat, limiting her diet to boiled and mashed maize, the leaves of certain trees and certain other vegetables.

This is the custom generally known under the name of *la couvade* (»hatching») and which among the Choroti exists in its most typical form. The father remains lying in bed for five or six days, or *until the navel-wound of the child is perfectly healed*. The reason for this is quite obvious and was, besides, expressly pointed out to me by the Indians. The navel-wound may become a dangerous source of infection, and the new-born child is in its most delicate condition during the first days or until the navel-wound is healed.

Before I give further explanations of the ideas underlying the couvade practices I shall say a few words about the birth customs of the Mataco and the Tobas. These tribes do not practice couvade in the proper sense of the word, but they have the same ideas about an intimate connection existing between the new-born child and both parents.

What I have stated as to the birth customs of the Choroti also holds true of those of the *Mataco*, with the exception that the Mataco father does not actually lie in bed. He has nevertheless to take certain precautions, and the fact that he pretends to be in a delicate condition during the first critical days of his child's life is shown by the expression the Mataco use of him. He is said to have an *aſttah limpáh*, that is to say.

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»to be a little sick», which means that he has to be cautious with regard to his work and his diet, just like his wife. Any heavy work, hunting, fishing, the touching of iron instruments, is prohibited to the father, since otherwise his delicate son might fall ill and die. Fasting is likewise obligatory for both of them. The Mataco say of both parents: *uenhilātāk, yil vuh. i.e.*, »they do not eat, there are many demons of death» (moving about and threatening especially the child, but also the parents themselves). A light vegetable food, mainly consisting of boiled and mashed maize, is prescribed for both of them.

When the confined woman has been delivered, her ventral parts must be well covered to protect her against evil spirits which might do her harm. In the evening drums are beaten to keep off the same supernatural, malicious powers. If the woman is the wife of a great chief, a special dance is performed which the Mataco call *Katináh* and which takes place at great feasts celebrated by the whole village community. Like all other dances of the Mataco, the *Katináh* is in its character ceremonial or a sort of conjuration by which evil spirits are kept off or made harmless.

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Among the *Tobas*, just as in part among the Mataco, the ceremonies which are performed and the precautions taken are more elaborate when the mother is the wife of a great chief. Even some time before birth takes place the woman, as we have already seen, has to observe certain rules in regard to her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish. As soon as the woman has been delivered her body must be well covered, for otherwise, I was told, the evil spirits may enter into her and kill both her and her new-born babe. The danger is particularly great at night. Therefore the Indians assemble in great numbers outside the chief's house, chanting the whole night, accompanying themselves with their rattle-gourds and drinking great quantities of algaroba beer. In the day the young men perform the dance *Nomí*. During the first days the woman does not leave the house, and although she is not ill she remains completely inactive. She likewise continues to fast, eating neither fish nor meat and living solely on maize and certain leaves. — The above ceremonies are performed, and the rules of diet are observed, during five days, or until the navel-wound of the child is completely healed.

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Much the same ceremonies are performed when the mother is a woman of ordinary rank, with the exception that the father of the new-born child alone chants to his rattle the first evening after the birth; and the dance *Nomí* does not take place. The happy event is always celebrated by an algaroba drinking-bout. The mother does not stay in bed and

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does not seem to be ill, but she abstains from any work during the five critical days and goes on dieting, particularly avoiding fish.

All these customs are based upon the belief that, at the moment of birth and during the first days afterwards, both the new-born child and the mother are particularly exposed to the attacks of the evil spirits, called *peyák*. These demons are believed to arrive in great numbers in the form of snakes — a special kind of snake existing in the country of the Tobas — but invisible, and with every breath of wind try to enter the house and penetrate into the woman with the consequence that, if they succeed in doing so, both the mother and the child will fall ill and die. The chanting and the shaking of the rattles at night and the dancing in the day-time, just as the precaution to cover the woman, have for their object the protection of the mother and child and to keep off the evil spirits. Similarly, the drinking of algaroba beer is on this occasion of a ceremonial character, as we shall see later on.

Not only the mother, however, but also the father of the child has to observe certain precautionary rules especially in regard to his diet. The custom of »couvade», at any rate nowadays, only exists among the Tobas in a modified form. According to what the Indians themselves told me they formerly practised this custom almost as strictly as the Choroti do still, the father being obliged to lie inactive in his bed for many days, strictly fasting. In our days the Toba father does not observe a real couvade, in so far as he does not keep to his bed. He merely abstains from doing hard work and avoids certain kinds of food, because they are believed in some way to influence unfavourably the health of his new-born child. Thus for instance, if he eats the head of a cow his little son will soon die. Similarly he must be cautious in eating fish. His principal food during the critical days consists of maize and certain fruits. These rules are observed for about one week. That the first days are considered so critical, is due to ideas which we already found among the Choroti and Mataco. When among the Tobas I asked the father of a new-born child how long he had to keep the rules of couvade, he pointed to the navel of his son, meaning to say that as soon as the navel was all right the danger was passed. It is believed that evil spirits might enter into the child by the navel-wound and kill it.

In my work *The Civilization of the South American Indians* I have tried to describe the ideas underlying the custom of couvade, which in South America is practised by most tribes in one form or another. Whilst referring the reader to this work for further details, I shall here only add

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M 846 a few words to explain the custom with particular reference to the Chaco Indians. The primitive idea that a new-born child is especially exposed to supernatural dangers is not difficult to understand; like most savage customs it has an underlying stratum of reality. The child is naturally at the beginning of its existence in a delicate state, and as a matter of fact, the mortality among new-born children is terribly great in the Chaco as in other parts of South America where the natives live in a state of nature. The Indian from his standpoint cannot fail to ascribe such facts to supernatural causes, and therefore the ceremonies at birth assume to a great extent a magical or religious character, conjurations and similar rites playing a prominent rôle in them.

As I have already pointed out, the couvade practices are essentially founded on the idea that between the new-born child and both parents there exists an intimate connection so that everything that happens to the parents is also supposed to happen to the child. Now as far as the mother is concerned. it is not difficult to understand why primitive peoples have arrived at the belief in such an intimate connection between her and her new-born babe. Being keen observers they have undoubtedly noticed that while the mother suckles her child, her own physical and mental condition is to a certain degree reflected in her delicate offspring. M 842 More enigmatical appears at first sight the firm conviction of the Indian as to a still more intimate connection or sympathy uniting the *father* with his new-born child. This curious idea is explained by the peculiar theory of conception which is held by the Indians. The primitive Indian does not know that the germ of the new being is in fact in the woman herself and that the man only fecundates it at the sexual act. He evidently believes that the seed springs from the man and that the rôle of the woman is limited to receiving and developing it during pregnancy, just as the earth receives the seeds planted into it and in due time brings forth the full-grown fruit. This is the idea which Professor von den Steinen found among the Xingu tribes, who regard the *man* as the bearer of the eggs, and consequently afterwards could identify the father and his new-born son. calling the child »the little father». This idea is evidently general in South America. for instance in the Gran Chaco, and explains why the Indians consider the relationship existing between the father and his new-born son still closer than that existing between the child and its mother. T 842 847 There are indeed customs which so strongly emphasize the father's share in the generation of offspring, that the latter appears to be almost wholly of the flesh and blood of its father. Thus among the Tobas there

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prevails the custom that a man simply kills the child of his married daughter if his son-in-law has incurred his displeasure; and all Chaco women kill their new-born babes if they have been abandoned by their husbands and, in general, when the father is unknown. Similarly an Indian woman as a rule kills the child she bears to a white man directly after it is born, if not before. Such customs no doubt assume the recognition of a very intimate relationship between the child and its father. The child is part

Young Toba Indian outside his house. Bolivian Chaco.

and parcel of the father, or rather, *is* the father. Hence, if the woman is displeased with her husband and has broken all relations with him, she destroys the child she has born him.

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According to the idea of the Indians the father with his new-born child forms as it were one single personality, and everything which happens to the father during the critical days is supposed to affect his little son directly. The rules which the former has to observe concern first of all the food. If the father eats some unsuitable food, this — as the Indians told me — would be just the same as if his delicate son ate the same food and the consequences would prove fatal to the latter. The situation remains critical as long as the navel-wound is not perfectly healed. If, at birth, complications of any kind ensue with the new-born child or with

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the mother, these are at once set down as the operation of evil spirits. The parents, especially the father, are released from the restriction laid upon them by custom as soon as the child is assumed to have become independent of the physical and mental constitution of its parents.

Among the Chaco Indians, there does not exist any ceremonies corresponding to our baptism, but a *name* is always given the new-born child. The Chaco Indians name their children after animals, birds, reptiles (for instance Bird, Alligator, Lizard), or after bodily peculiarities observed in the child (for instance: Tsihnilak, »Paunchy», a Choroti name), but the names seem on the whole to be given at random and not with the same discrimination which is the rule among some Indians of tropical South America. There is however one peculiar feature to be noted in this respect: the reluctance generally displayed by the Indians to mention their real names. I very rarely heard the Indians using each other's names in their daily conversations, and if one wished to find out the name of a certain Indian, this was as a rule extremely difficult. When a Choroti, a Mataco, or a Toba went to the settlements of the whites to work, he usually assumed a special European name for that time. Such names they never had any objection to mentioning, but they were extremely unwilling to tell me their proper native names. Only on certain occasions — for instance, at the drinking-feasts when all were in high spirits and very good friends — did it happen that the Indians told me one another's names. The native name, received in early childhood, is the real name and is to a certain degree taboo. To reveal it is a perilous thing, especially if the individual *himself* does it. It is to put oneself wholly in the power of an unknown stranger and wilfully to expose oneself to mysterious dangers.

As we shall find later on, the names of the *dead* are particularly taboo.

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Chapter VII.

Abortion and infanticide.

The custom of infanticide has already been touched upon, and as a matter of fact it is found among all Chaco tribes. The Indians do not consider a new-born child an independent personality, and it is looked upon as being so entirely the property of the parents that these have full right to do with it what they like. If for some reason or other the parents do not like to keep it they can destroy it, and such cases are by no means rare. Still it is necessary to point out certain facts with regard to infanticide as practised by the Indians, since the custom has not seldom been misunderstood by Europeans. The Indians do not kill their children from a lack of natural parental feelings; on the contrary, it must be emphasized that the savage Indian loves his offspring just as tenderly as do civilized people. Further, the Indians do not kill normal children except in such comparatively rare cases as those mentioned in the last chapter. A regular custom of killing for instance new-born female children does not exist. Infanticide is mainly practised in the case of children who are born in some way abnormal or under abnormal circumstances. In the first place it is superstitious fear that induces the Indian to kill his children. According to the Indian idea monstrous or in some way deformed children, or children which in general are born very sickly, cannot have been conceived in a natural way; they must have come into being through the operation of a demon. Indian myths, to which I shall refer later on, have much to tell about women who became pregnant in a supernatural way, during bathing or otherwise, and in consequence gave birth, not to a human child, but to a monster. Such a monster is looked upon with horror and regarded as a most ominous thing not only for the family concerned but for the whole village. It is an evil spirit that is born in the midst of the Indians and which will visit the whole community with sick-

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ness and misfortune. Thus the Choroti expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *mōhsek* (spirit), and they therefore generally kill the child at once. The Mataco call their evil spirits *aitláh* and regard a monster as an *aitláh* personified. Similarly the Tobas believe that a sick child is possessed by a demon (*peyák*), or is itself such a demon, and owing to the close connection which there is between the child and its parents, this may entail unfortunate consequences for the parents also, nay, for the whole tribe.

Father Cardús relates that when among the Tobas a woman dies in child-birth, the new-born child is buried alive with its mother's body[1]). I do not believe that such a custom is practised by the Tobas of to-day, but it may well have existed formerly. A woman who dies in childbirth is always regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear, since the accident is explained as an operation of evil spirits to which the woman has fallen a victim. But the new-born child with its mother forms, as it were, one single personality; consequently the child also is regarded as being possessed. Besides, a sucking child which is bereft of its mother is also left without nutrition since, according to Indian ideas, a new-born babe can only be nourished with the milk of its own mother, and would thus die in any case.

We may of course also assume that practical considerations have led the Indians to infanticide. The Indians understand that a sickly or deformed child has scarcely any chance of developing into a strong man and a useful member of society. In the hard struggle for existence under which the Indian lives it may even be merciful to destroy him. I believe however that such considerations play only a subordinate part in the custom of infanticide, which must first of all be explained by superstition.

The same custom prevails with regard to *twins*. Among all tribes the second is generally killed. The birth of twins is among all Pilcomayo tribes looked upon as an unnatural and most ominous thing, since the Indians consider that one man cannot become the father of two children at once. The second, consequently, must be the offspring either of another man or of an evil spirit. Besides, the Indians say that a woman has not sufficient milk to nourish two babes at the same time, and from this point of view also twins are regarded as unlucky. The Indian woman, who has to work hard, is anxious not to bear more children than she is able to nourish and to take care of. In a Choroti family three or four

[1]) Cardús *op. cit.* p. 263.

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In a Chonti family three or four children, arriving at intervals of two or three years, seemed to me to be the rule. Among the Tobas and the Mataco the children were somewhat more numerous, especially in families where the man had two or more wives. Whether the matter is or is not arranged by abortion, I cannot say. 163

Abortion is practised by unmarried women who become pregnant in consequence of their sexual licentiousness. I have never seen unmarried women with children in any tribe. Married women also have recourse to feticide or infanticide when they have been abandoned by their husbands. Similarly, as I have stated before, a Toba man may kill the newborn child of his married daughter if his son-in-law has incurred his dislike. 847

Abortions are effected by the Chaco women by mechanical treatment. The woman kills the foetus by beating her abdomen and after that presses it out with her thumbs. She may perform the operation herself or be aided by some old woman. This is done fairly early, generally in the third or fourth month of pregnancy. The operation is said to cause the woman some pain, but does not seriously affect her health. Poisonous drugs or other abortive means are not used by the Chaco Indians.

If the Indians find nothing immoral in infanticide, this of course is still less the case with abortion. It is wholly a private affair of the woman or of her family, with which the community as such does not interfere. A feticide certainly does not cause her more remorse than the extraction of a tooth. Custom is very strict on this point, not only among the Chaco tribes but among all South American Indians.

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Chapter VIII.

Education of children. Puberty ceremonies.

855 In the last chapter I have pointed out that infanticide, as practised by the Chaco Indians in certain cases, cannot be explained as a token of a lack of parental feeling in general. The Indian parents love their children, feed them well and try to protect them not only against natural dangers but also against evil spirits by means of body-painting and amulets. To what extent they take care of the well-being of their offspring is best shown by the custom of couvade. Even at those times of the year when the food is scarce I do not believe that the Indians allow their children to suffer from hunger. At the algaroba season again, when there is an abundance of food, the children go on eating from morning till night, and since the food to a great extent consists of fruits more or less indigestible, it is at that time a common thing to see young children of both sexes whose stomachs are abnormally distended so as to make them really paunchy. Gluttony is a characteristic feature of the Chaco Indians during the seasons, but especially of the children.

855 The Chaco Indians bring up their children in complete liberty. Parents are never seen punishing their children for disobedience or faults committed. This is partly due to the fact that the sense of what is proper and permissible is not developed among the Indians in the same way as in civilized societies. The Indian hates restraint and fetters of any kind, he wants to be free and independent himself and grants his children the same liberty. The latter, on the other hand, from an Indian point of view very seldom appear punishable, since they easily accommodate themselves to the customs and moral views of the tribe. An Indian boy may rob or do some other harm to a stranger, be he an Indian of a foreign tribe or a white man, but he will, from a natural instinct, respect the property of a

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Photo W. Hansson.

Toba boys of the Argentine Chaco. The one standing most to the right is armed with a small bow and arrows.

Toba girls of the Bolivian Chaco.

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855 member of his own tribe. In the training of the Indian children the power
861 of example and the natural desire to imitate has the most effect. It is interesting to note how the young boys constantly watch the occupations of the elder men and how easily in this way they acquire the necessary
868 skill in the same occupations, above all in fishing and hunting. When the Toba boy is about six or seven years old, his father makes him a small bow and arrows with which he frequently practises shooting, thus at an early age acquiring dexterity in managing the weapon. Similarly the girls follow their mothers everywhere, down to the river, to the fields, and the forest, keenly watching how she does her work and soon learning to do the same.

881 As far as I know, no particular ceremonies are performed among the Choroti and Mataco with young boys at the attainment of puberty, nor do the present day Tobas in Bolivia practise any ceremonies of this kind. According to some ancient writers, the Tobas of the 18th century practised certain ceremonies with young boys, consisting of a peculiar arrangement of their hair and in pricking them on the body with sharp-pointed bones, but since the particular purpose of these ceremonies was to initiate them into the profession of a warrior, I shall reserve the details till later on, in treating of Indian warfare.

On the other hand, when a young girl has her first menstruation and becomes marriageable, the incident is celebrated among all Chaco tribes with certain feasts, dances, beer-drinking, and purely religious rites. In order fully to understand these ceremonies it is necessary to know the ideas which the Indians entertain about the mysterious phenomena of puberty. It is by no means sufficient to say that the puberty ceremonies simply serve to initiate the girl into her coming sexual life; their significance is much deeper.

881 The physiological process which causes the menstruation of the
941 women, incomprehensible as it seems to the Indian, strikes him as some-
[821] thing extremely mysterious and must needs give rise to certain superstitious beliefs. Thus both the Tobas and the other Chaco tribes seem to have the idea that this strange phenomenon is caused, or at any rate influenced, by the new moon. Moreover, since the menstrual periods, and especially the first menses, are as a rule connected with certain nervous disorders and other alterations in the physical condition of the woman, it is naturally thought that during these critical days she is seriously exposed to the influence of evil spirits. At the same time, of course, owing to the awakening sexual desire, the relationship between this physiological

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process and the other procreative functions of the woman is realized. The attainment of puberty therefore for the Indian girl certainly means the beginning of her sexual life, but at the same time it means her entrance into a very critical epoch of development, during which she is often — especially at child-birth and during the following menses — exposed to supernatural dangers. Hence the initiation ceremonies at puberty have for their object partly her direct protection against these dangers for the time being, partly her purification once for all from the evils associated with her sexual functions during the years to come or — to express it more plainly — to *harden* her against evil spirits. From this point of view we have to regard all puberty ceremonies of the Indians, even such practices as painting, scarification, and tattooing of the body or face, often undertaken with girls on the attainment of puberty.

In the dances and conjurations performed in honour of girls at puberty it is the women who, contrary to what is generally the rule in religious ceremonies, play the most prominent part. Among the *Choroti* the puberty of girls is celebrated with a magical dance called *Káusima* after the instrument which the women use for it; the instrument is called *káhuis*. The *káhuis* is a dancing-staff, two or three meters in length, made of a light kind of wood or bamboo, which has a bunch of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These rattles produce a hollow sound when the staff is struck on the ground and are supposed to possess a mysterious power to influence the spirits. This power of course must be explained from the fact that to the Choroti the deer is a demoniacal animal. The *káhuis* staff is the only magical instrument used by the Choroti women and it is never handled by the men.

The dance begins at the first new moon after the appearance of the signs of puberty, because the moon is believed to cause and have great influence upon the menstruation of women. It is performed every day until the following new moon, sometimes even still longer. At a *Káusima* dance which I witnessed the arrangement was as follows. The mother of the girl and some other elderly women formed a circle, or rather an elliptic ring, outside the hut where the girl was, each holding her rattling dancing-staff. Close to the ring four medicine-men were sitting at equal distances from one another, holding their rattle gourds (*pelite*). There were besides two more medicine-men standing up, each provided with a drum. During the dance the women moved round ceremoniously with slow, regular steps, chanting loudly and marking time with their rattle staffs which they struck on the ground. The men outside the ring also chanted, shaking

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their rattle gourds, whilst the men provided with drums beat them. The girl in whose honour the dance was held was standing motionless and silent at the entrance of the hut reclining against the wall and had to remain so during the whole ceremony. Sometimes, when towards evening she got tired and was on the point of falling asleep, one of the medicine-men came up to her and shook his rattle close to her face as if to keep her awake. The ceremony began in the afternoon and was continued with short pauses throughout the whole evening until midnight. I was informed that as long as the dance goes on the girl need not be veiled, but as soon as the conjuration is finished for the night she must have her face and her whole body well covered. During the whole period that the dance is performed she is moreover obliged to fast, avoiding fish and meat and living only on some light vegetable food.

I may add that all the men who took part in the ceremony were painted on the face in one way or another. Some of them simply had the face coated red with roucou or black with charcoal, whereas others had X-shaped or other patterns painted on the cheeks. The men's faces are always painted in this way at the conjurations of the Indians, and these paintings have a purely magical significance.

The drinking of algaroba beer also forms part of the magical practices at the feast, but it is strictly limited to the men.

The object of all these ceremonies is to protect the girl against the evil spirits, the *möhsek*, by which she is believed to be particularly attacked during her unclean condition. The spirits try to enter into her through the face — especially through those parts where there is a natural opening of the body, such as the eyes, the ears, the nose, and the mouth — and also through the ventral parts, the consequence being, if they succeed in doing so, that she will fall ill and die, or become supernaturally pregnant and give birth to a monster. It is in this way that the Indians account for the birth of those deformed children which they kill directly after birth. To prevent such frightful accidents the girl's head and body are covered after the conjuration is finished for the night. By means of the dancing, chanting, drumming, etc. the evil demons who take an interest in the girl and swarm about her are conjured and rendered harmless. According to the idea of the Indians she is not only protected for the time being against their attacks, but she will also retain a certain power of resistance against them in the future.

The puberty of a girl is not celebrated in all cases among the Choroti with so many ceremonies as in the case just described, but the

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Painting by E. Wassström

The *Kduslma*, a magic dance of the, Choroti, performed in the honour of girls at puberty.
The girl is standing at the entrance of the hut.

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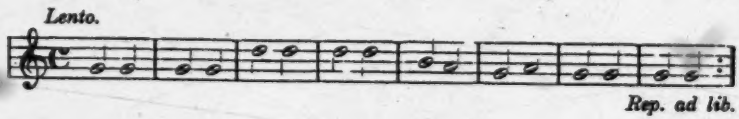
Kausima dance is always obligatory. Thus in a case which came under my notice the dance was performed by a middle-aged woman who, holding the dancing-staff (*káhuis*) in her right hand, proceeded with slow regular steps backwards and forwards in front of the house, where the girl, in whose »honour» the dance was performed, was sitting motionless. The woman accompanied her dance with a peculiar monotonous chant marking time, as usual, with the *káhuis*. Sometimes one of the small girls went and joined her, holding the dancing-staff together with her and walking in the same time. The dance and chant was begun at sunset and continued with short intervals till midnight. The melody of the chant which was repeated over and over again, was the following:



It is evident that the object of the dance was to drive away or keep off the evil *mōhsek* who were trying to harm the girl.

Exactly the same custom prevails among the neighbours of the Choroti in the south, the Ashluslay Indians, who in their culture are so closely related to the Choroti. The fact that the rattling dancing-staffs form a magical instrument peculiar to the Chaco tribes, may also be inferred from the puberty ceremonies in vogue among the *Lenguas* of Paraguay. These ceremonies are shortly described by Mr. Barbrooke Grubb, but since he gives no explanation of their significance I may mention them in this connection, with more reason since the Lenguas are culturally closely related to the Indians of the Mataco-Choroti group. The main dance is, as among the Choroti, performed by the women who circle round the girl to be initiated, chanting and marking time with their rattle staffs. A troop of lads, dressed in ostrich plumes and wearing masks to represent evil spirits, issue from the forest, running one behind the other in a serpentine formation, move in and out among the crowd, jingling bunches of hoofs and from time to time uttering prolonged shrill cries. At their near approach the women dance and chant with increasing vigour round the girl pretending to protect her and to drive off the masked »spirits» [1]). The idea just indicated by me with regard to the Choroti, namely, that the young woman will, through the initiation, become permanently har-

[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* p. 178.

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dened against evil spirits, seems to appear very clearly from the puberty ceremonies of the Lenguas. The girl, in order to be hardened against the spirits, must be brought in close contact with them, but this must be arranged in such a way that they cannot do her harm. The lads have at first conjured the dangerous invisible foes and compelled them to enter into the masks by imitating them in their external appearance and by uttering cries which no doubt are supposed to imitate the cry of the spirits. When afterwards the girl comes in contact with the demons while they are thus subdued and rendered harmless, she is believed to obtain a certain immunity from them even for the future. The principle is exactly the same in other initiation ceremonies.

Among the *T o b a s* the puberty ceremonies are more complicated when the girl is the daughter of a great chief, in which case the incident is celebrated by the whole community and with much the same ceremonies as take place when the chief's wife is in child-bed. For the five critical days the girl is not allowed to leave the house; she must fast rigorously and keep the whole body well covered. Every evening all the younger men from the neighbouring villages assemble outside the chief's house, shaking rattles, chanting, and drinking algaroba beer. During the day, again, the festival dance *Nomí* is performed by the men. The object of all these ceremonies is to conjure the evil spirits and prevent them from coming in the night to attack the girl. The Tobas fancy that on this occasion also the *peyák* arrive with the approach of night in the shape of snakes, trying with every draught of wind to penetrate into the house and to enter into the young woman, in which case it is believed that she will become pregnant with a snake, or fall ill and die.

Ideas of supernatural birth brought about by evil spirits entering into the woman in the form of snakes, seem to be common among the Tobas, as may be inferred from one of their myths which I shall relate in a subsequent chapter.

During the days that the girl is kept secluded she is also obliged to fast strictly. She is allowed to eat only the leaves of the plant *parák* (tusca, *Acacia aroma*) as well as the leaves and the fruit of the vine *tasi* (*charáde*, in the Toba language), the former raw but mashed, the latter boiled.

After the menses have passed, the mother of the girl together with other women go out on the plain to catch armadillos. The men, on the other hand, go out to hunt ostriches. After that a great feast is arranged, at which the women together with the girl in whose honour the feast is

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881 held eat armadillo, the men the meat of ostrich. The latter, besides,
262 drink algaroba beer excessively.

881 The distinction which is thus made between the sexes in regard to the
262 kind of food they have to eat at the banquet mentioned must be explained
775 by Indian superstition. The Tobas believe that the souls of dead men reincarnate themselves in ostriches; hence the ostrich has become as it were the special symbol of the Toba men. This also appears from the fact that the Tobas have simply been called 'Ostriches' by some of their neighbours. Similarly the armadillo has, probably for the same reason, been particularly associated with the women.

881 The customs described above are observed when the girl in whose
535 honour the feast is held is the daughter of a great chief. In other cases the puberty of a girl is celebrated with the *Nahotti* dance which is performed on five successive nights. The young men form into a ring holding one another by the hand and dance and chant in honour of the girl, who
[302] sits in the middle on the ground with her face covered. During the day she has her face painted red with *urucú*. Except on the occasion of the dance, she does not leave the house and observes a fast, eating nothing but the leaves I have mentioned.

841 Although the first menstruation is the most critical, the Toba woman has also to observe certain precautionary rules during the following menses, since she is at these periods in a more or less delicate situation. »When a woman has her menstruation (*lolyák*), the evil spirits (*peyák*) are angry with her», was the declaration an Indian once gave me when
[302] we were discussing these questions. What a Toba woman always does at such periods is to paint her face red with *urucú*, this being regarded as a protection against the supernatural enemies. She is also subjected to a
841 diet, in that she religiously abstains from eating fish, which — according
262 to a belief held at any rate formerly by the Tobas — would entail unfortunate consequences for the woman. If a woman who is just in her monthly period eats fish — so a Toba woman declared to me — she will go mad. If that has happened and her husband, having been out hunting, should bring home a parrot, the woman will eat its head raw with the consequence that she will turn into a tiger and kill her own people. I am not certain whether this particular belief is held any longer, but all Toba women still believe that if they eat fish at the critical epochs they expose themselves to the danger of temporary madness, or of becoming very thin and at the same time paunchy, that is to say, very ugly and little attractive to the men.

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The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter.

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aittáh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men.

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*.

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat.

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *M a t a c o* and the *C h o r o t i* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause

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M 304 inflammation in the face the girl has to fast for some days after the operation.

M 304 751 Tattooing has a purely magical significance, as may be inferred from the fact that the Mataco and the Choroti women regard it particularly as a protection against disease. Analyzing the custom, we can distinguish at least three factors in it, all of which are associated with magical ideas: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes) rubbed into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised which remain when the wounds have healed. Bleeding and scarification are common practices of purely magical significance among all Indians of South America, and as far as the Pilcomayo tribes are concerned I shall have occasion to mention this custom again in a later chapter. The very scars left after such operations are regarded as a protection against evil spirits. Further, that tattooing is done by means of ashes or soot is certainly not an accident. The use of ashes for superstitious purposes is of frequent occurrence among the Indians, the general idea being that ashes are a prophylactic against evil spirits. The custom of mixing ashes or soot with saliva is significant from the same point of view, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed to the saliva.

M [789]

M [827]

C 304 751 789 All women among the Choroti are tattooed in the same way, that is, have the same marks and patterns applied to the face, and no full-grown woman lacks this tribal characteristic. Since tattooing is regarded as a permanent protection against evil spirits and sickness, it is natural that a woman lacking it should be shunned by the men, but it is not a means of attraction or a »decoration» in the common sense of the word.

T 304 184 [302] As to the *T o b a s*, tattooing or the custom of making indelible marks on the body or the face was formerly in vogue among all Toba tribes as among all peoples of the Guaycurú-group; but the Bolivian Tobas of the present day have dropped this custom, contenting themselves with simple body painting. Tattooing among the Tobas seems to have been limited to the female sex, as indeed is the rule among the Chaco tribes. According to d'Orbigny, the Toba girls were tattooed when they attained puberty and became marriageable. Since the custom is no longer practised by the Bolivian Tobas I have not seen how it is done by them. The procedure, however, is the same as among other Chaco tribes, incisions being made in the face and ashes rubbed into the wounds. As appears from the photographs of some Toba women which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche took in Buenos Aires in 1899 the tattooing practised by the Toba women was exceedingly elaborate and complicated.

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The custom of tattooing, as it was practised by the ancient Guaycurú is described by Father Dobrizhoffer in much the following way. The Abiponian women, says the Father, [1]) not content with the marks common to both sexes, have their face, breast, and arms covered with black figures of various shapes, so that they present the appearance of a Turkish carpet. As soon as a young woman is of age to be married, she is ordered to be marked according to custom. She reclines her head upon the lap of an old woman and is pricked. Thorns are used for a pencil, and ashes mixed with blood for paint. The old woman, sticking the points of the thorns deep into the flesh, describes various figures till the whole face streams with blood. The first day she is sent home with her face half pricked with the thorns, and is recalled the next and the next after that, to have the rest of her face, the breast, and the arms pricked in like manner. Meantime she is shut up for several days in her father's tent and wrapped in a hide that she may receive no injury from the cold air. Carefully abstaining from meat, fish, and some other sorts of food, she feeds upon nothing but a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood. [2])

From Dobrizhoffer's account it appears that tattooing was practised by the ancient Guaycurú in the same way as by the present-day Chaco tribes.

Among the puberty customs we may also, in a certain sense, reckon the perforation of the ear-lobes for the insertion of wooden plugs or tubes. The perforation takes place even before the age of puberty, when the boy or girl is five or six years old, but the wooden ornaments are inserted later and are a sign that the boy or girl in question is regarded as a man or woman. The ear-lobe is pierced with a cactus thorn by an old woman, a grass or small wooden pin being inserted so as to prevent the wound from closing. Later on bigger and bigger pins are inserted, by which the holes are more and more extended, and lastly the plug or tube, which forms one of the most prominent ornaments of the Indians. The wooden plugs which the Tobas formerly wore in their ear-lobes, were so thick and heavy that they hung nearly down to the shoulders. In our own days they are only used by the Argentine Pilága, not by the Bolivian Tobas. It is to be observed that although the ear-lobes of both sexes are perforated, the ear-plugs or tubes are among the Choroti, Mataco, and Ashluslay worn chiefly by men, seldom by women, whereas among the Tobas *only* men wear them. These ornaments seem to have chiefly a magical significance.

[1]) Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, II. 20 sq.

[2]) This fruit is evidently the tasi fruit mentioned above, which thus is still eaten by the Toba women when they have to observe ceremonial fasting.

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Chapter IX.

Social morality. Property. Law.

In the chapter on the social organisation of the Chaco tribes I had occasion to mention the social sympathy and feeling of solidarity which unites all members of the tribe, manifesting itself amongst other things in the widest hospitality. A few words may be added in this chapter to illustrate this characteristic feature of the social life of these Indians.

Mr. Barbrooke Grubb, who is probably the greatest living authority on the Chaco Indians, regards the »socialism» prevailing among these Indians as their greatest curse. According to him, it discourages competition in the way of one man striving to rise superior to his fellow-men and effectively impedes cultural progress in general. No Indian is encouraged to have more possessions than his neighbour, because, in obedience to the socialistic law, he would have to work for the support of others of whom he does not approve. Accordingly he produces no more than is absolutely necessary for current needs. He never saves anything for the day of adversity because others are not doing the same and therefore, if he had a store in reserve, the thriftless would step in and share it with him. It is owing to this system that the Chaco Indian has become the thriftless, lazy, and selfish fellow that he is. The chief endeavour of the Mission led by Mr. Grubb therefore was not only to impart to the Indians true Christian civilization in general, but particularly to destroy their old socialistic system with a view to making them self-reliant workers accumulating property by their own efforts.[1])

Mr. Grubb has naturally looked upon the conditions and moral character of the Indians with the eyes of a Christian missionary and may be quite right in his general contentions as to the best methods of civilizing a pagan

[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* pp. 189 sqq.

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Indian tribe. For myself I have regarded them mainly from the point of view of the ethnologist and social psychologist, and cannot help holding a somewhat different opinion on the subject. The state of things which Mr. Grubb found among the Lenguas, it should be noted, is in the main the same as among all Chaco tribes. Mr. Grubb disregards the fact that what he calls Indian socialism, with the solidarity and social sympathy which it involves, is not accidental but the natural outcome of evolution and the circumstances under which the Chaco Indians have lived for centuries. It is not only a natural system but also a useful system, having been developed according to the Darwinian law that in a hard struggle for existence such societies have the best chance to survive in which the sympathetic feelings are strongest. In fact, nowhere is mutual aid more necessary than among the half-nomadic Chaco tribes, who are able to practise agriculture only to a small extent and who, as pointed out before, at certain times of the year have to struggle hard to support life. Lacking these social feelings, I believe, many of the smaller tribes, for instance the Choroti, would have perished long ago. Besides, the very history of the Chaco Indians proves that they have been driven into these inhospitable regions by forces over which they had no control, the most important being the pressure of superior peoples. Pressed from behind and meeting resistance from those already occupying these lands they were compelled to fight for their very existence. These facts of the historic past of the Chaco Indians account for the warlike character of many of them, but also for their strong social instincts.

Social sympathy is developed strongest among low tribes such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, but also manifests itself among the Tobas and the Mataco. What Mr. Grubb says with special reference to the Lenguas, that »the apparent hospitality is given grudgingly, though ostensibly with a good grace», does not at any rate hold true of the *Choroti*. I have mentioned before that bargaining in every form is unknown to the Choroti, and this is due simply to the fact that they regard themselves as being socially so intimately united that property and the products of labour are practically common to all. When a party of Choroti men return from fishing they always distribute the catch in the village so that every family has its share, and if one asks a Choroti why he does so, his only answer is generally: *etsīni*, *i.e.* »they are my brothers». »We are all brothers», is the principal tenet of their social morality There is an unwritten native law which states that no single family or individual shall suffer want as long as there are others who possess food. This system is looked

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upon as perfectly natural, and since full reciprocity exists, such an act of apparent liberality does not even evoke feelings of gratitude in those who for the moment are the objects of it. Those who have been travelling and therefore have not produced crops, or those who for some other reason have no means of subsistence for the time being, have a claim on the hospitality of their fellow-tribesmen. Even when there is nowhere a real want the successful hunter or fisher gladly shares his abundance of food with other families of the village, knowing that others will do the same to him on another occasion.

Native law enjoins hospitality not only to fellow-tribesmen but also to members of foreign tribes with which the Indians stand on a friendly footing. The same hospitality and liberality is shown to a white man whom the Indians regard as their friend. For my own part I frequently had, both among the Tobas and the Choroti, personal experience of this Indian hospitality.

In spite of the liberality which appears in the relations of the different members of the community to one another, private property is strictly respected in all the tribes. We can particularly speak of »socialism» in regard to the *land*, which, as I have mentioned before, is considered to belong to the people in general; no Indian, not even a chief, has a direct claim to any part of it above his fellows. The flocks of sheep and goats feed on the common pasture. Similarly the natural products of the country, such as game, fish, wild fruit, honey, and fire-wood, are common property. But as soon as an individual family has taken possession of a piece of this common land for cultivation, its ownership is acknowledged and respected as long as the family actually cultivates it. What the Indian collects of the natural products of the country and what he produces or acquires through his own work — such as clothes, ornaments, weapons and implements, magical instruments, etc. — is also regarded as his exclusive property, although, as soon as food is in question, an unwritten moral law and social sympathy largely induces the individual owner to share it with others. The flocks of course also belong to individual families. The sheep and goats always wear property marks, so that when they are taken home from the pasture in the afternoon the Indians can easily determine who is the owner of each animal.

The lower Chaco tribes, particularly the Choroti and the Ashluslay, do not know of any distinctions between rich and poor, and even among the Tobas it is a comparatively rare thing that a man possesses more than his fellows. Only a few great chiefs who have made successful wars against

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other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

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M 177 577 to the extent that the Indian comes under the influence of the whites and gets »civilized», to that extent also he loses the virtue of honesty, as he loses many other virtues characteristic of him while he is in a state of nature. This again is chiefly due to the bad example given by the whites themselves. The latter steal from one another, infringe the proprietary rights of the Indians and commit other wrongs against them. The Indians, who are on this point comparable with children, naturally think they may do the same, and their very sense of justice seems to require that the same measure as is meted to them by the whites, they may themselves measure to the latter again.

M 273 578 627 The only occasion when crimes may be committed among the Choroti are during the great drinking-feasts. When the Indians are intoxicated with algaroba beer they easily begin to quarrel with one another, and these quarrels in extreme cases may end in homicide. Now the Indians certainly regard a homicide committed in a state of inebriation rather as an accident than as a crime, for the algaroba beer is sacred and an Indian inebriated by it is looked upon as possessed by a spirit and not in the ordinary sense responsible for his acts. But the Indians are anxious to prevent such accidents and this is above all the task of the women, who never themselves drink any intoxicating drinks. On two occasions I witnessed quarrels arising during the drinking-feasts. In one case an Indian, when excessively drunk, got mad and seized his bow and arrow to shoot another Indian on account of some old controversy. Immediately the women took hold of him, deprived him of his weapons, and compelled him to leave the scene of the feast and the whole village. He in fact left for an other village in the vicinity and remained absent for several days, when he was allowed to return to his home. The minds of the two adversaries were then perfectly tranquillized and there was no more grudge between them. In the other case also the women intervened and seized the weapons from the quarrelling men to prevent fights and manslaughter. It is usual in such cases that the offending party is sent away from the village or »exiled» for some time.

T 674 Among the more advanced *Tobas* thefts occasionally take place, but there is a question whether this phenomenon is not due to the influence of the whites, since the Tobas have on the whole been more in contact with civilization than the Choroti. In the case of smaller thefts there is no T 685 public punishment among the Tobas; the affair is left to the private concern of the person robbed and the thief. In more serious cases the Council

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T 685

of the Old Men (*Eakachi*) intervenes, and they may subject the culprit to corporal punishment or exile him.

T 693 681

Only among the Tobas can we speak of a sort of Court of Justice, the Council of the Old Men (*Eakachi*) mentioned before. These men have to intervene in disputes and quarrels, but at the great drinking-feasts they are — just as among the Choroti — assisted by the women who do their best to part the disputing men. For an outrage committed in a state of drunkenness extenuating circumstances are found and the offender is generally exiled for a longer or shorter time. If such deeds however are repeated and the Indian proves dangerous to his fellow-tribesmen, he may be expelled from the community for ever. This for instance was the fate of the great Toba chief Taycolique, as I have mentioned before.

T 684

In other offences the culprit may, among the Tobas, be subjected to corporal punishment. A casual adultery is one of those comparatively slight offences which the offended Indian may himself punish if he likes, and a Toba man may in such cases beat his unfaithful wife. It is to be noticed that in a case of adultery the offended Indian does not generally punish the seducer but on the other hand frequently chastises his unfaithful wife, considering her to be more culpable.

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Real murders, as far as I know, never take place within the community, and blood-revenge is only practised in the feuds fought out between the different tribes. Blood-revenge forms part and parcel of the warfare of the Indians.

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Chapter X.

Visiting. Communication with other tribes. Trade.

648 Within the different sub-tribes there is frequent visiting between the families, and similarly there is frequent communication between those sub-tribes which live on a friendly footing with one another. The Choroti likewise have intercourse with certain foreign tribes, especially with the Ashluslay on the lower Pilcomayo and the Tapiete and the Avas on the northern course of the river. With the Mataco on the other hand, the Choroti have at times had strained relations, and the warlike Tobas they fear, avoiding as far as possible having anything to do with them. The friendly intercourse and trade between certain Chaco tribes, who perhaps live at great distances from one another, is of considerable ethnological interest.

574 Among all Indians, visiting is always a more or less ceremonial matter, but in the Chaco these ceremonies are comparatively simple. In their everyday life, when meeting out on the plain or in the forest, the Indians do not use any particular words of salutation. On the other hand, when an [576] Indian pays a visit to another house, and especially when he visits the house of a neighbouring tribe, he, on entering, only pronounces a word equivalent to »I come«, »I arrive«, in the Choroti and Mataco language this is *kanám*, in the Toba language *nóvyi*. The host only answers with a word which means, »it is good« (in the Choroti language *eis*, in the Mataco and Ashluslay language *is*, in the Toba *nóin* or *nõtta*). The guest can now take a seat at the door but keeps silence until he is spoken to. This is the rule in all cases where the guest is known and regarded as a friend. If algaroba beer and food is offered to him, this is a particular sign of friendship, and the guest may thereafter speak and move about freely as if he were at home. On the other hand, when the visitor is not welcome but regarded with hatred and suspicion the Indians turn the back and

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M 574

remain silent, perhaps muttering some menacing words. This is particularly the way in which the Tobas receive undesired guests. The best thing for a visitor so received is to leave the Indians as soon as possible, since these treacherous and daring savages would not shrink from taking his life.

C 576

When the Choroti guest leaves the house where he has paid a visit he always says: *yápeh*, or: *ayápeh*, »I go», or »I go back (to my own house)», to which the host only answers: *mah*, »go on!», »hurry on!». The Toba guest, on leaving, says *malhék*, or *kiuo* or *málhe'giuo*, (»I go», »I go back to my house»), the host answering with the word *hamóh* (»hurry on!»).

C 439

The *Choroti* barter with those foreign tribes with whom they maintain friendly intercourse, their own most important article of exchange being dried fish. From the Guarani-speaking Tapiete Indians, and in some cases from the Avas, they receive especially the much appreciated cereal, maize, as well as the red *urucú*-paint, indispensable for painting the face and the body on festival occasions. The *urucú*-shrub, it should be noted, requires a purely tropical climate and does not grow in the Chaco. On the other hand the Choroti barter with the Ashluslay in the south, receiving from them among other things one of their most costly ornaments, a necklace consisting of small buttons cut out from snail's shells and strung closely together. Such a necklace is from three to six yards in length, and is highly valued not only as a pure ornament but also on account of the magical properties ascribed to it. The receiving of these necklaces from the Ashluslay seems to be but a transit-trade, for the latter Indians in their turn buy them from the tribes in the interior of the Chaco, probably from the Lenguas, who according to Mr. Grubb, make such necklaces. Mr. Grubb adds that »these strings of buttons are the money of the people» and that the value of a big necklace is one sheep.[1] As a matter of fact, the Choroti when bartering with the Ashluslay pay one sheep each for these necklaces.

C [435 436]

Of more interest are the commercial connections which the *Tobas* have with neighbouring tribes, especially with the Mataco-Noctenes in the west and the Avas in the north. At any rate there is frequent intercourse between the Bolivian Tobas and the Avas living at the Catholic missions Tarairi, Tihüipa, and Machareti. In connection with the visits which these Indians are in the habit of paying to the country of the Tobas, I had an excellent opportunity of studying primitive Indian trade. The

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[1] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco
Toba SI/2

Avas, who belong to the great Guarani-group, mainly subsist by the cultivation of maize, a cereal which cannot be much cultivated in the dry pampas regions of the Chaco. The maize is therefore greatly appreciated by the primitive natives there. On the other hand, there is little fish to be caught in the small rivulets which flow though the country of the Avas, and the latter appreciate fish in proportion as it is scarce in their own land. But fishing, as we know, is the main livelihood of the Pilcomayo tribes. These different economic conditions have given rise to a regular sort of primitive trade or barter between the Avas and the Chaco tribes, especially the Tobas. This barter has essentially the character of an exchange of presents. A small party of Avas make the long journey from their own land to the land of the Tobas, bringing with them a couple of donkeys or horses laden with maize and sugar cane. The visit is paid to a village of which the inhabitants are known to the visitors, and generally lasts for about one week. The provisions which the Indians have brought with them are the visiting presents. A gourd of maize and some pieces of sugar cane are presented to each house. It is a point of honour among the Indians not to receive a present without giving something in return. The hosts therefore naturally give the guests what they themselves possess in abundance and what they know the latter will appreciate most, namely fish. The Chaco Indians always preserve their fish in a baked or dried condition, and at the fishing-season great stores of such dried fish are generally fo undin the huts. The Indian, in conformity with his natural tact, is of course anxious not to favour one friend more than another, and thus a regular system of bartering with definite measures has gradually developed. From what I observed, one small gourd of maize and two pieces of cane, each about one foot in length, answered to two dried middle-sized fishes, but in spite of any endeavour to be impartial, the measures could of course only be approximate. In return, fish is brought to the visitors from all houses, and the spresents is always paid for with the same amount of maize and sugar cane. This bartering goes on until the provisions which the visitors have brought with them are exhausted, when they leave with the acquired supplies of dried fish.

The Tobas, of course, also make similar visiting expeditions to the country of the Avas at the time of the maize harvest, bringing dried fish, and returning with provisions of the cereal so much appreciated.

That the Indian trade has essentially the character of an exchange of presents also appears from the fact that the Indians are only supposed

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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to barter with those whom they look upon as their friends and to whom they are paying the visit in question. It is not considered proper that outsiders, be they Indians of other villages or whites, should interfere.

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I may add that my own barter with the Indians always had the character of an exchange of presents. When I visited the Indian villages where I was known, I usually received presents of fish, fruits, etc., but it was always understood that these presents should be paid back in some form. Similarly, when I myself gave the Indians presents I usually received something in return, except when the presents — for instance the necessary presents of tobacco — were regarded as a natural tribute wich I had to pay for permission to stay in the village. Everyone who travels among Indians should bear in mind that Indian hospitality always means that something must be given in return, and that the traveller who neglects his duty on this point will necessarily be regarded as greedy.

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Chapter XI.

Warfare.

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The warlike character of the Chaco tribes has become almost proverbial. This reputation may be well-deserved as far as some natives of this hidden and savage country are concerned, but it does not hold true for instance of a tribe like the Choroti. The Choroti are by nature a peaceful people, and in the small quarrels they have at certain times fought out, for instance with the Mataco, they have displayed so little both of organization and personal courage that it is impossible to believe that they have ever been that ferocious and warlike people characterized by v. Rosen. On the other hand, such important tribes as the Lenguas and the Chamacoco in the Paraguayan Chaco have been characterized as great warriors by Mr. Grubb and Sr. Boggiani; on the Pilcomayo the Ashluslay, at the time when I came in contact with them, were still extremely savage and constantly at war with the Bolivian soldiers, and the Tobas are one of the most warlike tribes in the whole of South America.

The Mataco too, seem formerly to have been great warriors, at any rate more warlike than the peaceful Choroti. On this point Pelleschi writes on them: »The Indians love war; one may say so because they are very often engaged in fights. One war is followed by another, owing to the desire of the vanquished to revenge themselves, or the pleasure which the victors have taken in it. The motive of a war is fishing, or hunting, or the gathering of fruits on others' territory, the desire to take revenge for some offence, or the hope of taking spoils.[1])

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I have not seen the *Tobas* on the war-path, and I cannot therefore give the same minute description of their feuds and the customs they observe after a victory as I have given of the wars and victory feasts of

[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciaco*. p. 105.

[p. 102]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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the Jibaro Indians [1]). But the way of waging wars is about the same among all South American Indians, and in particular, the customs of the Tobas, as far as I know them, substantially agree with, for instance, those of the Lenguas as described by Grubb. As far as the victory feasts are concerned, the customs of the Chaco Indians are not in any way comparable with those of the Jibaros, which stand alone for their richness in complicated rites and ceremonies.

The history of the Tobas shows that they have in former times been a real scourge to the neighbouring tribes, and the white settlers on the Pilcomayo some 30 years ago were constantly in danger of attack. In our days the Tobas have become more stationary and in the same degree more peaceful. The most warlike Toba tribe are the Pilagá in the Argentine Chaco, who have waged war particularly against the Ashluslay on the other side of the Pilcomayo with a view to depriving them of the possession of that river.

The most important causes of the wars among the Chaco Indians have been vendetta and trespass upon foreign land. Whereas blood-revenge does not occur within the same tribe, it is commonly enjoined by custom as a duty in the relation of the different tribes to each other. But behind the blood-feuds there are often earlier quarrels, especially about boundaries. In an inhospitable country like Chaco, where agriculture is rendered difficult and game is comparatively scarce, the possession of a river like the Pilcomayo, extremely rich in fish, is naturally of great importance. Many feuds have been fought out between the Chaco tribes for the possession of this river. Both for the sake of the river and for the sake of the pasture necessary for the flocks, the Chaco tribes have fixed limits dividing the territory of one tribe from that of another. These limits are commonly recognized, and trespassing, when it is wilfully done, may become a cause of war. Father Lozano relates that the Tobas living in the region of Tucumán used a kind of boundary mark consisting of long forked poles, and that upon the points of these poles they used to hang the skulls of those who had attempted to enter the territory of others. [2])

Other causes of war among the Chaco tribes are the greed for acquiring the flocks and herds of another tribe and the desire to steal women. How far witchcraft, which has so often given rise to sanguinary feuds among the Indians, has played a part in the wars of the Tobas, I am not able to

[1]) See my *Blood-Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of Ethnology. Bull. 79. 1923).

[2]) Lozano, *op. cit.* I. 99.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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say. The Tobas certainly believe in witchcraft, but the rôle of this superstition as an originator of wars has evidently not been equally great as, for instance, among the Jibaros.

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When an attack against an enemy is planned, the old men of each tribe (*eakáchi*) together with the chiefs (*alyánek*) assemble every night to deliberate in a special place outside the village. Much algaroba beer is drunk on this occasion in order that the deliberations may lead to a happy result. In the shade of a big algaroba tree the old men invoke the »good spirit» (*peyák nóin*) so that he may give the warriors victory and protect them in the coming fight. The younger Toba men perform the dance *Nomi* for several days. Each sub-tribe marches out to war headed by its chief. But since these chiefs are often aged persons, too weak to perform their duty in the expedition successfully, a special leader is as a rule appointed by the old men when a war expedition is planned. This leader is generally a younger brother or some other relation of a chief, and he must of course have previously distinguished himself by courage and other warlike qualities.

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Photo W. Hansson.

Young Toba Indian mounted on muleback. Argentine Chaco.

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The war weapons of the Tobas were formerly the bow and arrow and the club, made of hard *palo santo* wood. The latter, we are told, were as heavy as if they had been made of iron. But the Tobas early learnt to know the European horse and used horses in their wars also. According to Campos, the Tobas who fought on horseback did not use bow and arrows but long lances [2]). Lances of this kind are still used for hunting the wild boar. The Toba warriors also used armour of tiger-skin and had the head adorned with plumes. Body-painting, moreover, formed an important

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[2]) Campos, *op. cit.* p. 250.

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part of the personal adornment for a war expedition. Father Lozano, describing the Tobas some two hundred years ago, says that they used to colour both the face and the body in time of war. Then »they painted themselves like tigers and other formidable animals, the figures of which they imagined would make them more formidable to their enemies«[1]). The Tobas of the present time, before they march out to battle, blacken the face with charcoal, whereas the breast, the stomach, and the arms are painted red with urucú. The chief Taycolique expressly told me that the Indians paint their body and face before a battle »in order to get more strength«; but at the same time they probably have the idea that this body-painting will inspire their enemies with fear.

Body-painting as a war custom is practised by all Indian tribes in South America and, as I have tried to show elsewhere, it is mainly resorted to for superstitious reasons. The red and black paint is believed to give the body strength and to protect it against the evil spirits who move about in the battle. But among the Tobas, who have been a tribe of professional warriors, measures of a permanent nature were formerly taken to give the men the strength and power of resistance needed in battle. These measures formed part of the initiatory rites performed with youths when they were received among the warriors, and all through they had a magical character. They mainly consisted of a peculiar arrangement of the hair, at which I have hinted before, and were begun while the boy was still a child. Charlevoix relates that the ancient Tobas, whom he calls Guaycurú, used to pull off the hair of a new-born male child as fast as it grew, with the exception of what was necessary to form a small crest of hair on the top of the head and two thin circles around it. When the boy was sixteen or seventeen years old he was initiated as a warrior. The ceremony was performed by some distinguished veteran who began to pull out the hair from one of the two circles. Thereupon he pricked him on various parts of the body with a sharp-pointed bone, and with the flowing blood smeared his head. Then he seized the hair-crest in the middle of the head, pulled it with all his might as tightly as possible, and wrapped it in a net. Lastly the whole body of the novice was smeared with a certain clay. When the man was twenty years old he was admitted among the older warriors. On this occasion his hair was again dressed; the whole crest of hair was cut off and the remaining circle was reduced until it was only one inch wide. He moreover painted himself from head to foot in various

[1]) Lozano, op. cit. I. 99.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco
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colours, tied a band of red twist round his head, adorned himself with plumes, etc.[1]) To understand these rites properly, we must know what initiation in general means to the Indian, and in particular what initiation into the military profession meant to a warlike race such as the Guaycurú. A warrior must be a man of great physical and spiritual power of resistance for he has to fight not only against visible enemies but also against invisible malignant spirits, and the initiation aims essentially at hardening him against the latter. The peculiar arrangement of the hair, which at every initiation was more and more reduced, was due to certain superstitious ideas about the hair, current among all South American Indians and common in a lower stage of culture. Similarly the red cotton band tied round the warrior's head, the red paint or clay applied to his body, and the blood smeared on his hair were like charms or amulets intended to protect him against evil influences.

Mr. Grubb, speaking of the wars of the Lengua Indians, points out that in war the Indians do not, as is generally believed, act like a disorganized mob, every man fighting for himself, but work on carefully planned lines. Some men are sent out as spies, with the object of coming as close to the enemy as possible and getting all the intelligence about him they can. In their actions they exercize the greatest prudence, rarely fighting in a body, and trying to overthrow the enemy with as little loss of life to themselves as possible[2]). This, I believe, holds true of all South American Indians, at any rate of the Tobas. Espionage, treachery, assassination, and sudden attacks, nearly always by night, play the main part in their feuds. The Tobas generally choose a moonlight night for their attacks, believing that the waxing moon will in some mysterious way promote the undertaking. No important enterprise is embarked on during the »dying» moon, since at that time it would fall out badly. The enemy village is surrounded in silence, whereupon the Indians from their ambuscades make a sudden attack upon it, enter the houses and kill the inhabitants. In their wars with the whites the Tobas have frequently availed themselves of the method of setting fire to the house they want to attack by means of fire-brands thrown on the roof. If the Indians succeed in taking the inhabitants unawares, all grown men and old women who are not able to escape are killed, the younger women and the children alone being spared. The women become the wives of the victors, in the

[1]) Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, I. 135 sqq.
[2]) Grubb, *op. cit.* pp. 107, 108.

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first place, of course, of the chiefs. The children are adopted as members of the tribe, and they readily amalgamate with it, the more so as the captives are generally well treated and admitted to equal privileges with their conquerors.

All Indian tribes of the Pilcomayo were formerly scalp-hunters and head-hunters, and some of them still practise this custom. The head of the slain enemy was cut off, the scalp stripped from the scull, and both were kept as a sort of trophy. Shortly before I arrived at the Pilcomayo in 1911, the *Ashluslay* had succeeded in killing nineteen Bolivian soldiers who were marching down to one of the military settlements on the river. The heads of the young men had been cut off and taken home by the Indians. Later on it was reported that their scalps or skulls, fixed on long poles, decorated the entrance of the main Indian village, being used at the great feasts as drinking-cups which were believed to inspire the drinkers with courage. For my own part I have not been able to gather more particulars about these head-hunting practices of the Chaco Indians, nor has any other traveller given information on this point. On the war customs observed by the Argentine Mataco-Vejos, the Italian traveller Pelleschi makes the following statement: »Whosoever kills an enemy wears as a trophy, if he has time to secure it, the scalp with the hair, the ears, and possibly a fold of skin from the back of the neck. He forms it to the shape of a cup by means of a bulrush or a flexible twig, which he binds and stitches all round the edge; then, while still bloody, he fills it with liquor, and holding it by the hair, passes it round to his companions, who empty it as they drink in honour of the victor and in scorn of the vanquished. Another way is to hold the scalp by the edge and pour out the liquor in drops over the hair and jaws.« [1])

As to the *Tobas*, I have gathered that when they return home after a successful attack a great feast is held, when the spoils taken on the war expedition are brought forth in triumph, dances are performed, and algaroba beer is drunk to excess. Dancing forms an important part of the feast. The victory dance of the Tobas is *Nomi* which is performed by the younger warriors during the day. A special dance is performed round the scalps, hung on high poles in the middle of the village, and beer is drunk from the skulls, but I have no more details about these ceremonies. Nordenskiöld, who during his travels in the Chaco came across a scalp taken by the *Mataco* in one of their wars, mentions in passing that

[1]) Pelleschi, *Eight Months on the Gran Chaco*, p. 80.

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»before the Indians parted with their trophy they demanded that their old women should be allowed to sing and dance with it». It is a pity that Nordenskiöld, dominated by his exclusive interest to obtain a rare Indian »curiosity», did not avail himself of the excellent opportunity to inquire as to the ideas which the Indians connected with this scalp-dance of the women. We must look for an explanation from other sources. In the account I have given of the war customs of the Jibaros I have shown that they are wholly founded on magical ideas. The hair and head of the slain enemy is regarded as the seat of his soul or spirit and therefore is full of mysterious power. In fact, through the dances and other ceremonies performed with the scalp or head, the trophy is turned into a fetish which will promote the luck of the victor in various respects. The fact that the women play the most important rôle at the scalp-feasts — which seems to be almost a general rule — is also due to special magical ideas. The most important of the beneficial effects ascribed to the trophy is that it promotes fertility and renders the domestic animals prolific. Since, according to the belief of uncivilized peoples, woman is, as it were, the symbol of fertility, not only in the human world, but also in the animal world and in nature, it is reasonable to assume that women perform the scalp-dance precisely to promote fertility by means of the lucky object. Such is the case for instance among the Jibaros, where the dance of »supplication» round the trophy is professedly resorted to with a view to making the harvest abundant and the domestic animals prolific. Evidently the Chaco Indians entertain similar ideas. Since the head or the scalp is full of spiritual power we can also easily understand that the Indians believe themselves to be »inspired with courage» by drinking from the trophy.

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Special honour is paid among the Tobas to chiefs who have carried a war to a successful end. The ordinary chiefs receive confirmation in their dignity by the Council of the Old Men, and the young temporary leader, elected for that particular war expedition, is made an ordinary chief in recognition of his merits.

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RELIGION.

CHAPTER XII.

Belief in gods and spirits in general.

I have mentioned before that the religion of the Chaco Indians is a subject strangely neglected by all who have travelled among these natives and studied their customs. Thus, in regard to the Tobas, the naturalist Azara arrived at the conclusion that they have no religion at all, and d'Orbigny rested satisfied with stating that »their religious beliefs are very limited», whereas the Catholic missionary Cardús considered the study of these things useless. Similarly, nothing — apart from the data published by myself — has been related of the religious ideas of the Choroti and Ashluslay. Almost the only author on the Chaco Indians who gives us some information about their religion is Barbrooke Grubb, but he deals exclusively with the ideas and customs of the Lenguas of Paraguay. 114

The main reason for this deficiency of our information respecting one of the most important sides of native culture is obvious. The subject of religion, if one has a real study of it in view, requires special training and a prolonged stay among the natives, and these conditions have been lacking in the case of most »ethnographic» travellers in the Chaco, not to speak of naturalists or ordinary travellers. But even to one who devotes special attention to the spiritual aspect of Indian culture the study of such a subject as religion is beset with great difficulties, and the study can hardly ever become exhaustive. Although this may undoubtedly be said of my own contribution also, I venture to believe that in the following account at any rate the most important religious ideas and customs of the Pilcomayo Indians are mentioned.

The lowest tribes of the Pilcomayo, the Choroti, Mataco, and — as far as I have been able to ascertain — the Ashluslay, have no belief in a supreme god, nor any ideas of a creation. Beliefs of this kind are extremely 776 773

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773 rare in all South America, and in the Chaco they are found only among such an advanced tribe as the Tobas, and, in a certain sense, among the Lenguas. The latter Indians, according to Mr. Grubb, ascribe the creation of all things and of man to a being disguised as a beetle, but this being is without moral attributes and in fact is only of purely mythological interest. As to the Tobas, they believe in two high gods or Supreme
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776 Beings, who — just as is the case with the Creator-Beetle of the Lenguas — only figure in their mythology but play no rôle in their practical religion. Moreover, the ideas they entertain about these Supreme Beings are not consistent but seem to represent two different stages in the evolution of their religious thought. These beings are especially spoken of as the creators of the world and of mankind. According to the apparently older version, all things were made by a bad deity Kaloaraik, »The Evil One», who created the world as miserable and full of suffering as it actually is in the mind of the Tobas. Again, according to the younger version, the world owes its origin to a good deity Peritnalik, who created things good and useful and thenceforward took benevolent care of mankind.

Since no kind of worship is paid to these Supreme Beings they have more interest from a mythological than from a religious point of view. I shall therefore deal with them again in a later chapter in connection with other myths of the Tobas.

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776 In practical religion spirits of a lower order play the main rôle. Of these spirits some are in their nature good, others again bad, but — as is usual among savage peoples — the latter impress the mind of the Indians more than the former and are therefore more conspicuous in their religion. The Choroti call these spirits *möhsek*, the Ashluslay *sitché*, the Mataco *aittah* or *nahüt*, and the Tobas *peyák*. In examining the different applications of this belief in spirits, we find that to the primitive Indians it is obviously of great practical importance: it compensates them for the lack of a notion of natural laws. Stupendous phenomena of nature, events otherwise unaccountable to them, especially disease and death, are explained as their mysterious actions. There are spirits inhabiting inanimate objects of nature and heavenly bodies, there are spirits embodied in animals and plants, and lastly, there are spirits who are not particularly attached to things animate or inanimate but have an independent existence, hovering about in the forests or on the plains, or in the air, causing such phenomena as thunder and lightning, eclipses of the sun and the moon, drought, devastating hurricanes, etc. Worst of course are those demons who are regarded as the causes of disease and death, and

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in their magical dances and conjurations the Indians as a matter of fact most often deal with these particular evil spirits.

These are features common to the religious beliefs of all Indians of the Chaco; indeed they are found among all South American Indians. But even in the Chaco this general belief in spirits appears in somewhat different forms among different tribes. The *Choroti* fancy that the spirits, *mōhsek*, in their external appearance have the shape of old, withered men (*kihīlahs*). They are, in the imagination of the Indians, provided with wings, which enable them to move rapidly through the air. Owing to their bird-like appearance the spirits are also called *ahuéna* (»the birds»). They are countless in number, mostly invisible, and as a general rule evilly disposed towards mankind. I never met an Indian who professed to have *seen* a *mōhsek*, but nearly all say that they have *heard* their voices at night. One peculiarity of the demons of the Chaco Indians is that they only exist at night. As soon as darkness sets in the Choroti Indian fears mysterious dangers from the *mōhsek*, who are then believed to draw near the villages in great numbers and even to enter into the huts, visiting the inhabitants with sickness and death. This is the reason why a traveller living with the Choroti can hear from some house nearly every night the low chant of some old man accompanied by the dull sound of the rattle gourd, *pelīte*, with which he tries to conjure and keep off the supernatural pests. At daybreak however the spirits are supposed to leave for the forests and the plains — with a piping or whistling sound, the Indians explained to me, which they are very clever in imitating. For this purpose the Choroti use a special kind of round whistle which they generally wear hanging round the neck as an ornament. At their religious dances they produce, from time to time, shrill whistling sounds with these whistles, professedly with a view to conjuring the *mōhsek*. The Indians believe that they can keep supernatural beings at bay by imitating them in their external appearance or their sounds.

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In the Chaco many weird sounds are heard at night which are apt to fill the natives with superstitious fear. The Choroti frequently told me about the »nightly whistling of the spirits» (*yap mōhsek ahnáh*). The peculiar piping or whistling which is most often identified with the sound of the spirits is, I believe, produced by certain insects living on the stems or branches of the trees. The spirit of the tusca tree was specially mentioned to me, but this spirit is said to be a »good» being.

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The idea of the Choroti, that the spirits have the shape of old men, has given rise to a peculiar and cruel custom. They do not allow their

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776 old men to die a natural death, but when they grow very weakly and
988 sickly they kill them with an arrow-shot in the heart, whereupon they
766 burn them with all their property instead of burying them, which among the Choroti is the general mode of disposing of the remains of the dead. The reason which they gave me for this custom was that if an old man is allowed to die a natural death he will be changed into an evil demon (*mōhsek*), who will rage in the village and kill all the people. This, according to their idea, can be prevented by giving the old men a premature, violent death.[1]) In order to understand this custom we must, moreover,
[754] take into consideration that to the mind of these Indians *all* aged men are more or less versed in the magic art, *i. e.* are sorcerers, and the spirits of sorcerers are specially feared.

775 The fact that old men and sorcerers are believed to be transformed after death into evil *mōhsek* seems to suggest that these spirits or demons are nothing but disembodied human souls, who have in the after-life been changed into supernatural and mostly evilly disposed beings. As a matter of fact, the death-spirit residing in the grave where a dead body has been buried is called *mōhsek* by the Choroti. Like most other primitive peoples the Choroti fear the burial-places because they fear coming in contact with the spirits haunting these places. It seems therefore evident that at any rate the souls of certain persons are changed into *mōhsek* after death. The word *mōhsek* may therefore be best translated into 'ghost'. The Indians only use it of the disembodied souls or spirits of dead men, but not of the shadow-like »double» of a living person, for which they have no particular word. Even when speaking of a recently departed person they generally simply use the expression *yäl*, *i.e.* »the dead one». *Mōhsek* particularly seems to have reference to the spirits of men who died long ago, and these spirits as a rule are more evilly disposed and more feared than the spirits of Indians recently departed.

776 The Choroti, like other Chaco Indians, do not deify inanimate objects of nature to the same extent as many other South American tribes. Yet

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[1]) Nordenskiöld's categoric statement as to the practice of infanticide and parricide among the Choroti therefore is not correct. (»Der Mord beschränkt sich auf den Kinder- und Eltern*mord*»; and: »Wenn ein Indianer seine alte blinde Mutter oder seinen verkrüppelten Vater tötet, so befreit er sie selbst von einem Leben das ihnen eine Last ist und sich selbst von einer Extramühe im Kampfe ums Dasein.» (*Indianerleben*, p. 38). As I have stated above, the killing of parents is limited to old men, and this custom must wholly be explained from the superstition of the Indians. Infanticide again is limited to the cases mentioned by me in a previous chapter.

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there are several evidences of a nature animism, although as a general rule only such objects and phenomena as especially strike their imagination or with which some remarkable incidents are connected, are incidentally or permanently looked upon as being animated by spirits. There are evil demons in the sky, which among other things cause such strange phenomena as eclipses of the moon, of which the Choroti have the same idea as the Mataco and most other Chaco tribes. Other evil spirits of the sky cause drought, which in the Chaco forms the greatest obstacle to a successful cultivation of the fields. The demons keep the rain back, and the Indians in consequence try, during the dry season, to conjure them by drumming, shaking rattles and chanting so as to compel them to release rain. On the other hand, there are demons operating in the violent thunderstorms, although these are generally accompanied by torrents of rain. The Choroti believe that thunder and the flash of lightning are caused by a great number of *mōhsek* who are rushing through the air and making an onset upon the village. These spirits are more often called *ahuéna*, »the birds», and thunder and lightning are therefore generally called by the Indians simply *ahuéna*, although the proper name in the Choroti language is *súntini*. Every time a burst of thunder is heard, the Indians, sitting in their huts, begin to shout and scream loudly, in order to frighten away the molesting supernatural visitors. There are evil spirits in the violent whirlwinds and sand-storms so common in the Chaco, as well as in the cold south wind, *niúk*, which during the dry season sweeps over the plains and produces rheumatism and chills among the natives, badly equipped as they are against cold weather. The warm north wind again, *úkine*, is sent by »good» spirits. Thus the radical contrast between the cold south wind and the warm north wind, both of which are sent by supernatural agents, has been to the Choroti the main reason for making a distinction between two of the four cardinal points.

Spirits, *mōhsek*, are also believed to animate *trees* and *plants* — bad spirits poisonous and harmful plants, good spirits the beneficial and useful ones. The ideas which the Indians entertain about plant spirits and the customs to which they give rise, are substantially the same among all the tribes, and I shall presently give an account of them.

The Choroti also believe in *animal* demons. Thus they share the belief, held by all Indians in tropical and subtropical America, that a jaguar which attacks Indians or appears under unusual circumstances, is a »man-tiger» *i.e.* a man, generally a sorcerer, who has assumed the shape of this beast. Even in his lifetime a sorcerer may incidentally change

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776 754 825 himself into a jaguar and, appearing in this disguise, kill people. Similarly, an evil wizard is believed to be able to send his soul into a horse, in which shape he will kill the person whom he wishes to bewitch. The horse in fact is the particular shape in which the tutelary spirit of a sorcerer is believed to appear, and is therefore looked upon as a demoniacal animal. Of other animals which are looked upon with superstitious fear the deer must be especially mentioned. This shy and innocent animal is regarded as an evil spirit, a *möhsek*, and its flesh is never eaten by the Choroti. On this point these Indians share a belief which, curiously enough, is met with among many tribes in different parts of South America. In the noiseless movements of this animal and the mysterious rapidity with which it disappears into the forest there is in fact something »ghost-like», which is apt to awaken superstitious awe in primitive minds.

754 825 Just as a sorcerer is supposed to be able to change himself into a jaguar when he wishes to harm other people, so he is also believed occasionally to assume, for the same purpose, the shape of a venomous reptile, for instance that of a rattlesnake. The bite of a venomous snake is generally attributed to the mysterious operation of an evil wizard.

776 823 Of spirits inhabiting what we should call inanimate objects the spirits of the *stones* are of particular interest. In order to understand the ideas which the Choroti entertain in this respect it should be borne in mind that in the interior parts of the Gran Chaco, and particularly in the country inhabited by the Choroti, stones are extremely rare or almost unobtainable. It is in part due to this fact that the Choroti regard stones and pebbles in general with superstitious dread and would never, for instance, put on a necklace in which a stone of some kind entered as a decoration. The reason which they gave me for this aversion was that an evil spirit, a *möhsek*, dwells in the small stone and would infallibly invade the person who hung it on himself. The explanation was, moreover, added, that when a sorcerer bewitches an Indian he avails himself of a pebble-stone which he throws against his victim making him fall ill and [755] die. Similarly, when the medicine-man cures the patient, he extracts the disease-demon in the form of a small stone. In other words, stones are shunned because they form one of the magic arrows which the sorcerers use to kill or harm their enemies.

753 The theory which the Choroti have formed about *sickness* and *disease* has appeared from some of the above statements. Sickness, like epidemic disease, is always due to supernatural operation. It is caused by a demon, a *möhsek*, directed by a human sorcerer. Wizards cause sickness by

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throwing spells embodied in certain material objects, small stones, cactus thorns, bones, certain insects, etc. We should say that it is the stone, thorn, etc. that causes the pains felt by the victim, but its real cause is the mysterious demon embodied in the object. This appears most clearly from the conjuration with which the medicine-man tries to remove the evil and in which the demon is directly addressed.

An epidemic is likewise caused by evil spirits, but independently of the operation of a wizard. Among these spirits there are real death-demons, who in the imagination of the Indians wander about the village carrying off one Indian after the other. The Indians are aware that these diseases, among which are small-pox, malarial fever, dysentery, etc., are imported by the whites, and they consider that their own medicine--men are powerless against them.

M 776 [177]

The animistic beliefs of the *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Choroti, but it is evident that the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia have been considerably influenced in their religion by the Tobas, as is the case in their general culture. The Mataco make a distinction between two kinds of lower spirits. The commonest kind of spirit, although not the most feared, are those whom the Indians call *aitták*, generally adding the attribute *slámsa* or *slahsa* which means »small». These are of exactly the same nature as the majority of the spirits whom the Choroti call *mōhsek*, although in external appearance they more resemble the *peyák* of the Tobas. Whereas in the imagination of the Choroti the *mōhsek* have the shape of old men, the *aitták* of the Mataco — and similarly the *peyák* of the Tobas — have the shape of young boys (*nátses*), but at the same time they are provided with wings, so that they can move as rapidly as the wind from one place to another. They are invisible, countless in number (*váh*) and evilly-disposed (*tavakái*) towards mankind. *Váh aittáh tavakái*, »there are numberless evil spirits», the Mataco are in the habit of saying when speaking of the world of demons. The ideas they entertain about them are the same as those of the Choroti. During the day these demons are not dangerous to men, for then they have retired far away to the plains and the forests. But as soon as night draws near they arrive in great numbers, although not in visible shape, dancing round the villages and huts which they like to visit with sickness and misfortune. The Indians try to keep them off by dancing, when they imitate the very movements which they fancy the demons make, by drumming, and by performing conjurations to cure patients already attacked by the demons.

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776 The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared
761 because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

753 Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance,
776 the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút teláh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is
[755] possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyá*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamsa* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mata-
[752] co for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by
776 a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural
821 phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

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A Toba woman spinning wool. Bolivia.

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The house of the Toba chief Niradyák (»Alligator»). Bolivia.

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M 776 821 in drought, in eclipses, etc. Thunder and lightning, for instance, are caused by the demons called *aittáh tavakái pählai* (the »thunder demons»), which pass in great numbers through the air or above the clouds. Eclipses of the moon, on the other hand, are attributed to a demon called *aittáh hayáh* which is supposed to prey upon the moon. The Mataco try to frighten away both the thunder-demons and the demon eclipsing the moon by shouting loudly and making a noise, and by beating drums.

M 775 774 The same may be said of the nature of the *aittáh* and the *nahút* as has been said of the *möhsek* of the Choroti. It seems to me probable that they are in their origin nothing but spirits of the dead or disembodied human souls. From this point of view, I believe, Pelleschi is right when he says that the religion of the Mataco can be characterized as essentially a worship of souls. But there are disembodied souls of different kinds. The Mataco word for »soul» is *kasītah*. It is the soul that detaches itself from the body, temporarily during dreams, permanently in death. As a death-spirit the *kasītah* is generally the object of fear. Of these death-spirits some, which are particularly evil-minded, become *nahút* or personifications of mortal diseases, whereas others have become personifications of curable illnesses and lesser evils. It is a well known fact that the spirits of certain persons — especially of sorcerers and persons who have died a violent death — are greatly feared, and just such spirits are likely to turn into that particular kind of demon whom the Mataco call *nahút*. The M [764] fact that graves are regarded as the dwelling-places of these demons confirms the conclusion that the *nahút* are in their nature nothing but disembodied human souls.

T 776 As to the *T o b a s*, I have already mentioned that they call the spirits *peyák*. Like the Mataco, the Tobas fancy that these spirits appear in the shape of small boys (*nätolik*), and in daily life, when speaking of these beings, they more often use the word *nätolik* than the word *peyák*. Although the spirits in the main have human form, they at the same time resemble birds, and more particularly ostriches. At any rate the Tobas informed me that »the *peyák* have wings, large like those of the ostrich» — an idea quite natural to a people who even identify living men with ostriches. Still they are mostly invisible to the human eye; only the medicine-men who are endowed with a special clear-sightedness can see them and enter into communication with them. The whole world swarms with these mysterious beings, who are regarded as the causes of all evils that befall man. Everything that has been stated on this

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point of the spirits and demons of the Mataco and the Choroti as workers of evil also holds true of the *peyák* of the Tobas.

The curious idea that the evil spirits have the shape of small boys (or girls) has probably given rise to a cruel custom which, according to the Catholic missionary Cardús, was formerly practised by the Tobas. If a young boy or girl up to the age of ten to twelve years became ill, and the medicine-man declared that he or she could not recover, the patient was simply killed by the blow of a club, even if he or she was still able to walk [1]). This practice was in all probability due to the belief that such children would be changed into evil *peyák* if they were allowed to die a natural death, and that this could be prevented by killing them. This explanation is confirmed by the analogous custom of the Choroti, mentioned before, of killing old men before they die a natural death. The Tobas also kill sickly and deformed infants directly after birth, and it is not improbable that this practice is connected with the same superstition.

The Tobas deify inanimate objects of nature to the same extent as other Chaco tribes. Of fetishism there are only a few traces. Objects and phenomena are regarded as animated by spirits (*peyák*) in the same degree as they attract the attention of the Indians by their effects and by remarkable incidents associated with them. Thus for instance, near the village Tseihatanyi on the Pilcomayo there is a great lagoon which according to the belief of the Indians is inhabited by *peyák* and regarded with superstitious fear. The reason appeared to be that some time ago the fish in this lagoon died from some unknown cause. The Indians could not account for this strange incident except by assuming that the lagoon was haunted by evil spirits. Violent tempests and hurricanes, such as often occur in the Chaco, as well as thunder and lightning are, according to the idea of the Tobas, directly caused by malignant *peyák*. One night during my sojourn among the Tobas a violent thunder-storm swept over the village where I was staying, stirring up clouds of dust from the river against the houses, partly destroying them, and blighting the chañar trees which were just flowering. The Indians declared that the hurricane was caused by a great number of *peyák* who were attacking the village. The following night the Tobas recited a prayer and performed certain conjurations with their rattle gourds in order to keep off the demons and prevent them from repeating their disastrous operation.

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[1]) Cardús, *op. cit.* p. 263.

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The thunder (*dimyí*) and the lightning (*kahonrá*) are explained in the same way: a great number of spirits are passing through the clouds producing the thunder and the flash of lightning. Whirlwinds, which are often seen to move along the ground raising pillars of dust and damaging the habitations, are regarded as the passing of the spirits. The Tobas are in the habit of saying of such whirlwinds: »There goes a *peyák* dancing in the dust». Drought caused by prolonged absence of rain is ascribed to the same supernatural causes: it is due to the *peyák* who are seated in the clouds and keep the rain back. These demons the Tobas do not try to expel by their usual incantations, considering that the sky is too far off for the spirits to be influenced.

The idea that the evil spirits are particularly in action at night time is common to all Chaco tribes and most South American Indians. The belief is not difficult to understand since the association of darkness with the mysterious and destructive powers of nature is quite natural to an undeveloped mind. Moreover, in Chaco heavy thunderstorms and hurricanes usually take place at night, and most diseases — especially diseases of the chest and the throat, from which the natives often suffer — are worse in the night than during the day.

The etymology of the word *peyák* is obscure, and the Tobas could give me no information as to the origin of these spirits. Considering that the *peyák* closely resemble the ghostly beings whom the Mataco call *nahút* and the Choroti *möhsek*, it is probable that they have the same origin as these and are simply disembodied human souls. The belief that small boys who die a natural death are changed into *peyák* confirms this explanation. At any rate, the death-spirits form one important class of supernatural beings who people the spiritual world of the Tobas. The word for »soul» is in their language *kadepakál* which literally means »our (i. e. the human) shadow», *pakái* being the Toba word for »shadow». The very etymology of the word indicates how the Indians conceive the »free-soul» which is reflected in the water or in a mirror, which separates from the body temporarily or for ever in dreams or death. Neither in their external appearance nor in the effects they are able to produce on account of their supernatural powers, do disembodied souls (*kadepakál*) essentially differ from the *peyák*. The religion of the Tobas therefore has most probably — like that of other Chaco tribes — originated in the deification and worship of human souls. This hypothesis gains strength by an examination of what we may call the

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»animal-worship» of the Indians, or their belief in the reincarnation of the dead in animals.

Whereas it is not, perhaps, correct to speak of a real »worship» of animals among the Tobas, yet on this point they hold various superstitious beliefs. Thus of the great carnivorous beast, the jaguar, they have the same idea as many other South American tribes, namely, that it may serve as the abode or disguise of certain evil spirits of human origin. If, for instance, the proper funeral rites have not been performed for a dead person, there is, according to the idea of the Tobas, the danger that he might be changed into a man-tiger, and this belief is confirmed when -- as frequently happened in former times — the tiger visits a village at night-time and kills or carries off some one of its inhabitants. Evil sorcerers particularly are believed to appear as man-tigers, not only after their death but even in their life-time. Even the souls of dead women, who have not been buried with the proper rites, may be reincarnated as such beasts. The jaguar (*kidók*, *nahōre*) is an animal that frequently figures both in the religion and the myths of the Tobas.

There is the same superstition with regard to the ostrich, in so far as departed souls are sometimes supposed to transmigrate into these big birds. Moreover, the idea seems to be that only the souls of *men* reincarnate themselves in ostriches; the bird has therefore, as it were, become the symbol of the Toba men. In this connection I may recall the fact that the Quichua-speaking peoples in the region of Tucumán in Argentine formerly called the Tobas by the name Juris, *i. e.* 'Ostriches' on account of their running speed.[1]) *Juri* or *suri* is the Quichua word for 'ostrich'. Similarly the neighbours of the Tobas in Chaco, the Mataco, call the Tobas *Uánhlai*, an appellation which can only be translated into 'the Ostrich-men', *uánhla* being the Mataco word for 'ostrich'. Attention may also be drawn to the curious Toba custom that at the feast, with which the puberty ceremonies in honour of a chief's daughter are closed, the men must only eat the flesh of ostrich, whereas the women must only eat the flesh of armadillo.

The Toba myths also speak of the transmigration of souls into other animals and birds, into herons, deer, boars, ant-bears, rabbits, etc. Parrots, and especially the small parrot called *cata* in Spanish, are looked upon with superstition. The evil spirits may also take the shape of snakes, and as such are especially dangerous to young women bathing in the river.

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[1]) See Lafone Quevedo, *Arte de la lengua Toba*. La Plata, 1893, p. 5.

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775 825 A Toba myth tells of a young girl who was supernaturally made pregnant by a snake while bathing, and who thereafter gave birth to a number of snakes. When girls have their first menstruation they must be careful to cover their body well, because evil spirits are trying to enter them through the genital parts in the form of snakes, in which case either supernatural conception, or disease and death will follow. Evil demons, and especially the spirits of the dead, are also supposed to enter into fishes. Hence the women are bound to abstain from eating fish for some time after a death. On the whole, the superstitions with regard to animals appear particularly in the food restrictions imposed upon the members of the community on certain occasions. I shall treat of these restrictions in more detail later on.

821 The heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, and the stars are among the Chaco Indians not objects of worship and not deified. It is true that there are some statements to the contrary, but they seem to me to involve an exaggeration. Thus of the Argentine Mataco, Pelleschi relates that they have known a sort of sabeisme or worship of the stars, particularly characteristic of the women. When the moon rises, he tells us, the women hurry out from the houses, grasp one another by the hand forming into a circle, and begin to dance and shout in honour of the silvery star. They do the same when the morning star appears. They invoke the star and ask him to bless the algaroba harvest and the other forest fruits[1]). A custom like this, I believe, is unknown to the Bolivian Mataco, but I doubt whether even among the Argentine Vejos there exists any real *cult* of the heavenly bodies. All Chaco Indians certainly 821 pay some attention to the moon and to certain stars, or constellations. Mr Grubb relates that the Milky Way is looked upon by the Lenguas as 171 »the path of the *kilyikhama*» (evil spirits), and stones — which are to the Lenguas objects of superstition as to the Choroti — are believed to pass into this constellation. The Pleiades are connected with the beginning of spring, and feasts are held at the time of their rising,[2]) etc. Ideas of this kind are, I believe, current among the Pilcomayo tribes also, although I have not made close inquiries on this point. That the sun 821 is a man and the moon is a woman, and that they are married to each other, is a mythical idea which has been noted as held by the Tobas,[3])

[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 118.

[2]) Grubb, *op. cit.* p. 139.

[3]) Lehmann-Nitsche, *La astronomia de los Tobas*, (*Revista del Museo de La Plata*, Bd. 28, 1925) p. 184.

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but with their practical religion it has little or nothing to do. More important is the rôle played by the moon. Not only the months are reckoned from this heavenly body; it is also believed to have a mysterious supernatural power. There is however the usual difference between the effects of the new moon and the waning moon. All Pilcomayo tribes ascribe to the new moon a mysterious influence in promoting both natural processes and human undertakings. Thus, even the menstruation of women is, according to the idea of the Indians, caused, or at any rate influenced, by the new moon. In agriculture great attention is paid to the phases of the moon. The cultivation of the fields is certainly always dependent on rain-fall; but if sowing is done during the new moon, greater success is secured. It is the same with other important undertakings. Algaroba, tusca, and chañar beer, for instance, should be brewed at the time of the new moon. When the sacred drink, the Tobas told me, is exposed to the moonlight and stirred with a stick, this proceeding — in addition to drumming, chanting, and other magic rites — is supposed to promote the fermentation in a wonderful way. Likewise, the Chaco Indians and particularly the Tobas, as I have stated before, generally undertake a war expedition at the time of the waxing moon, not only because of the light that the moon affords at night, but also believing that the moon will have a favourable influence on the enterprise.

On the other hand, just as the new moon and the waxing moon is good and propitious, so the waning moon is harmful; it has the effect of making everything decrease and die out. At that time the weather turns cold, men fall ill and die, the tigers appear at night from the forests and kill people, etc. Exactly the same bad effects are caused by eclipses of the moon, or at any rate are believed to follow if the evil spirit which is preying upon the moon is able to complete his work of destruction.[1])

[1]) The Choroti ascribe eclipses of the moon to a *móhsek*, the Mataco to an *aitláh* or *nahút* (Cp. Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 118.

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Chapter XIII.

Belief in „good spirits".

776 I have so far mainly spoken of such spirits of the Chaco Indians as are regarded as essentially evilly disposed to mankind, being looked upon as the authors of sickness and misfortune. But the religion of these Indians is by no means only a pure demonology. They also assume the existence of »good spirits« and these from a certain point of view are of the greatest interest. The Chaco Indians especially speak of their good spirits with reference to the guardian spirits of the medicine-men and the spirits animating certain plants. With the former I shall deal presently. For the moment a few words may be said of the spirits which are
776 believed to animate the *plants*. Of course, there are also evil or harmful
824 plant spirits. The character of the spirit animating a tree or plant is naturally first of all determined according to the useful or harmful properties of that tree or plant. Thus plants producing poisonous fruits harmful to man, are animated by evil spirits, since the effects are always ascribed to the indwelling spirit, the »soul« of the plant. Likewise, in
[754] the cactus thorns, of which malignant sorcerers avail themselves in throwing spells, are animated by evil *nõhsek*, *aittáh*, *peyák*, according to the names different tribes give these demons. Still the Chaco Indians pay special attention to the spirits of such trees or plants as produce edible or otherwise useful fruit, which in a country like Chaco are of essential importance to the inhabitants.

776 Among trees which from an alimental point of view are of great import-
824 ance to the Chaco Indians I have mentioned the algaroba, the chañar,
262 and the tusca, the fruits of which ripen in the months October to February. It is particularly these trees which are said to be animated by »good spirits« who control their growth and cause their fruits to ripen.

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The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noín* or *nõtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aittáh slahsa is*, the Choroti *mõhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aittáh* or *mõhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nõtta* (= *noín'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noín*.

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mind a mysterious and sacred thing. To be intoxicated by the drink is therefore equal to being internally filled with a spirit or spiritual power, and this »good spirit» will, they believe, protect the intoxicated person against supernatural evils of every kind. Thus the Tobas are wont to say of such a person that he has a *peyák nõtta nãppihe*, i.e. a good spirit or *peyák* in the brain (or more strictly speaking, in that special part of the brain which is nearest to the forehead), and other Chaco tribes have exctly the same idea. This is the true reason why the Indians celebrate every important and critical incident, birth and death, the puberty of girls, marriage, warfare, etc., among other things with excessive drinking of some fermented beer. The spirit is present in different liquors in different degrees according to the strength they possess. The best beer, in the opinion of all Indians, is the algaroba beer, because it is the strongest of all. Next to this, the Choroti and Mataco appreciate the beer brewed from the tusca and chañar most, whereas the Tobas prefer the beer made of *sandia* or water-melon. From the fruit of the tusca and the chañar the Tobas only rarely brew intoxicating drinks. Similarly maize beer, which plays such an important part in the religious mysteries of the Avas and of many other South American peoples, is not unknown to the Chaco Indians, but is less appreciated than other kinds of beer, since maize is but little cultivated by them.

The idea that a spirit resides in the fermented drink — an idea which is encountered among many South American tribes[1]) — is of course connected with the belief that the very state of ecstasy or exaltation into which a man falls when intoxicated by such a drink is of mysterious or supernatural origin. But there are different kinds of religious ecstasy, and all of them are not inspired by good spirits but some by demons. The spirit of the drink naturally manifests its character in the effects it produces in the person intoxicated by it. The Mataco, who have been most in contact with the whites, say that in their own algaroba beer there is an *aitláh dlahsa is* (a good spirit), in the brandy of the whites, on the other hand, an evil and destructive demon. Consequently, when the whites get drunk on their brandy and begin to fight, the Mataco say that they are inspired by demons, and at their great »carnival» — which in Bolivia is usually celebrated amidst orgies and fights — they say, many *aitláh tawkui* (evil spirits) are moving about. It is the same

[1]) See my *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis*. Humaniora. I: 4), the chapter »Berauschende und narkotische Getränke».

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with the Indian himself: when intoxicated by brandy he gets mad and is always ready for fights and outrages; on the other hand, his own native beers comparatively seldom have such bad effects. As a rule they render him happy and joyful, virile and courageous, and make him forget the troubles and hardships of life. This is the reason why, to the Indian mind, there is a *good* deity or spirit residing in the native algaroba beer. But since this deity in the first place inspires the Indian with *virile* qualities, the drinking of this as well as of most other intoxicating drinks is strictly limited to the men. Women never drink algaroba beer, except perhaps some very old women who are freed from the restrictions normally laid upon the weaker sex.

The great drinking-feasts of the Chaco Indians during the »season» will be described later on, as also the ceremonies with which the sacred drinks are prepared.

When the Chaco Indians speak of their »good spirits», however, they generally mean spirits of another kind. The medicine-men as a rule speak of these spirits in the singular, meaning thereby a mysterious personal guardian spirit of their own. Such a being is for instance the *peyák nötta* of the *T o b a* medicine-man, a kind of individual guardian spirit with whom the Indian has entered into a special relation and whom he asks for assistance in sickness and in every necessity. Among the Tobas all professional medicine-men and many of the older men are said to have such guardian spirits; even some of the women, who then exercise the profession of female sorcerers. The more the person in question has acquired power over his or her »good spirit», the more that person is in possession of what we should call supernatural powers. When, for instance, the medicine-man has to cure a sick person, he summons his own guardian spirit and by his aid expels the disease-demon from the patient's body. Similarly, those sorcerers who practise black or nefarious magic are able to harm their fellows only by the aid of their assistant spirits whom they invoke and who will despatch a spirit against their victim.

If a sorcerer wishes to harm another sorcerer, who of course also has his guardian spirit, or some other person in possession of such a spirit, he can do so only by fighting and vanquishing the assistant spirit of that person. This was especially made clear to me by the *C h o r o t i* Indians. A sorcerer who wants to kill or harm such a person, I was told, invokes his own »good spirit»; this comes down from the heavens in the

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shape of a horse [1]) — an animal which is regarded with superstition by the Choroti — and will kill the »good spirit» of the inimical sorcerer. The latter, being thus deprived of his assistant genius, will fall an easy victim to his assailant.

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The guardian spirit is not hereditary but is acquired individually in the course of life and to a certain degree through teaching. The older a person grows, the more power and influence he is believed, by the Tobas, to gain over his *peyák nõtta*; hence the medicine-men are generally men of advanced age. The same may be said of the *Choroti*, who regard every old man as being more or less a sorcerer and endowed with supernatural powers. Since the women are always physically and spiritually weaker than men, they have always more difficulty in obtaining guardian spirits. I only know of a special initiation for women, who dedicate themselves to the exercise of the magic art, in the case of the Choroti. A women who wants to become a sorcerer, I was told, must C 824 eat a raw chirimoya fruit (*Anona chirimolia?*). When ripe, the chirimoya is edible and good: but in an unripe condition it is said to be poisonous, and a person eating of it according to the belief of the Indians will die or fall ill. If however the woman, while she is eating the raw fruit, performs the ceremony *Kausimä* with the magical rattle staffs, she will escape harm, and she will moreover in the future be able to conjure spirits with success. This idea is in fact typical of the initiation ceremonies of the Indians: the woman has been in contact with evil spirits but has been able to resist them, in consequence she has been rendered immune against them and acquired power over them which enables her to use them for her own ends in the future.

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Apart from the fact that the »good spirit» of the Choroti medicine-men is at least in some cases believed to appear in the form of a horse, the »good spirits» are in their external appearance like other spirits. The *Tobas* say that their *peyák nõtta* dwells in the heavens (*piyim*) from where he comes down to assist the medicine-man who invokes him. Similarly the Choroti say that their *möhsek eis*, when summond by the sorcerer, comes down from the sky, but the »sky» (*pöle*) is not to the Choroti a definite place like the *piyim* of the Tobas. *Piyim* has developed into a mythological concept: it signifies Paradise or the realm of T 776 772 the dead of the Toba Indians. When a Toba Indian dies, I was told,

[1]) Since the horse was introduced among the Chaco Indians by Europeans, this is not of course an original idea of the Choroti.

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his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyím*, by his *peyák nŏtta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyím* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aittáh is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aittáh is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aittáh talák*, i.e. »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aittáh talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aittáh talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

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South American Indians, at any rate the primitive tribes east of the Andes, have no idea of benevolent deities or spirits who interfere in the destiny of men, and that the conjuration of evil spirits is the only form of worship among them. This opinion however is erroneous and due to superficial observation. Magical conjuration is certainly the most salient feature in their cult, but a more propitiatory form of worship also exists, although naturally it escapes the attention of passing travellers. Nor is the idea of »good spirits» difficult to understand. The belief in evil or harmful demons — most of which are nothing but souls of the departed — among the primitive Indian races has evidently originated as a generalization of the experiences of life. The struggle for existence is often hard for primitive man. Disease and death seize them; tempests, hurricanes, and conflagrations devastate their villages and fields; thunderbolts and lightning strikes them; ferocious beasts kill them. In all incidents of this kind the primitive mind, which has no definite ideas of natural causation, is prone to see the operation of invisible supernatural agents. But many times the savage succeeds in overcoming the evils; he is frequently able to cure disease and to escape death and has learnt to control, in different ways, the attacks of nature. In all this he likewise cannot fail to see the intervention of some supernatural power who helps him to get the better of the difficulties. Such general considerations and experiences have no doubt given rise to the belief in a »good spirit» of the kind encountered among the Chaco Indians.

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Chapter XIV.

Religious rites and ceremonies.

As I have pointed out, magical conjurations play the most important part in the religious life of the Chaco Indians. These conjurations are of different kinds, according to the different occasions on which they take place, or the particular purposes for which they are performed. In some cases the Indians simply try to frighten the evil spirits away by shouting and making a noise with instruments of some kind; in other cases they try to render them harmless by coërcing and compelling them. But the Indians also have recourse to magical conjurations with rattles, drums, dancing, etc. to influence good and beneficent spirits, for instance those animating certain trees and plants, or with a view to producing certain effects in nature or in the world of human beings merely on the principle of sympathetic magic. On the other hand, there is also a sort of worship, inasmuch as prayers are addressed to the individual guardian spirits in trouble and distress, and these prayers may, at least among the Tobas, be accompanied by offerings. 189

Those practices which may be referred to the category of »conjuration» apparently play the most important part. Being mostly performed by means of magical instruments of some kind, they are at any rate the most conspicuous. Prayers to a great extent escape observation and are kept more secret than other religious ceremonies.

1. Magical ceremonies to cure sickness.

We know already the general theory of disease held by the Chaco Indians. Most bodily evils from which the Indians suffer are, according to their belief, due to witchcraft, which implies that the illness has been sent by a human enemy, generally a malignant sorcerer. In this 753

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753 way the Indian has arrived at the theory of »possession»: an evil spirit has entered the body in the form of a material object of some kind. It is the medicine-man's business to extract the evil intruder, and if he succeeds in doing so, the patient will recover. An epidemic, on the other hand, especially such as has come to the Indians from another part of the country, is believed to be directly caused by special disease- and death-demons of a particularly malignant character, who wander about in the village carrying off one victim after the other. Against these demons even the art of the medicine-man is powerless. The only thing the panic-stricken Indians can do in such cases is to abandon the haunted village as soon as possible and wander off to another part of the country.

There is, to these Indians, practically no such thing as »natural» disease and death. Every illness is attributed to supernatural causes, be the diagnosis in a particular case witchcraft or disease.

Therefore, in dealing with native methods of curing illness we are here only concerned with such evils as are set down to witchcraft.

164 There are certain ailments which are particularly characteristic of
753 the Chaco Indians. Rheumatic pains, especially during the dry season, are very common, and both young and old people suffer from them. As we know, they usually come on very suddenly, and even civilized peoples still use expressions like »fairy-dart», »*Hexenschuss*», etc. of such
753 sudden ailments. Beliefs of this kind are held both by the *Choroti* and by the other Chaco Indians. The Indians have very concrete ideas as to the way in which the sorcerers and the demons who serve them operate. The mysterious pain suddenly afflicting a man is explained as due to an arrow shot by an evil spirit. The Choroti accordingly call this disease-demon *mōhsek ihītek*, i.e. »the arrow-shooting demon», and this is an idea which is quite common among the South American Indians in general. The expression seems to indicate that at least in some cases an evil spirit is supposed to operate alone. As a rule, however, he is sent by a human sorcerer. I have already mentioned that the »arrow» or »splinter», discharged by the sorcerer or his assistant demon, is generally a small stone, a cactus thorn, a piece of bone, or a small insect (for instance a worm or a beetle). I have also stated that this seemingly insignificant material object is identical with a mysterious demoniacal being whom the medicine-man, in curing the patient, tries to »extract» from his body. The object is sent by a *mōhsek*, or in a certain sense *is* a *mōhsek*. Generally, however, the Choroti call the mysterious intruder

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by another name: sometimes it is called *nihlêle*, in other cases again *pini*, words which have their equivalents in the Mataco and the Toba languages in the terms *aláh* and *kaipák* respectively. In regard to all these words we have to remember that they belong to the particular mystical terminology of the sorcerers and cannot exactly be translated into any civilized language. The Indian »arrow» or »splinter» is half an inanimate object, half a live being, half material, half spiritual, half natural, half supernatural. Whatever it is, it is to the primitive mind the most real thing possible, because its existence is manifested by its dreadful effects.

The Choroti Indian, who works evil against his fellow-tribesmen by throwing spells against them, is called a wizard (*ayïeu*). The expression for the nefarious operation itself is in the Choroti language *páhu ahuli sikiätsä*, (»to work evil against a fellow-man by means of witchcraft»). For the purpose of bewitching another Indian the sorcerer tries if possible to get hold of something that has been in close contact with the victim's body, for instance a single hair, a little saliva when he has spat on the ground, something of his excrement, a piece of his clothes, etc., and uses these things as vehicles for his curses. But even a medicine-man or curer, as we have seen, is called *ayïeu*, and there is thus no essential difference between an Indian practising black or nefarious magic and one practising white magic. A man in possession of a guardian spirit may use his art either for the benefit of his fellow-tribesmen or to harm them, according as to whether he regards them as his friends or as his foes.

Besides rheumatism, affections of the throat and the chest, arising from chill, are very common among the Chaco Indians during the dry season. The Indian explanation invariably is that an evil spirit has entered into that particular part of the body where the pain is felt. If a Choroti Indian suffers from head-ache and I ask him what is the matter with him, he will answer that he has a *möhsek* in the head; if he suffers from a catarrh, he will point to his throat or his chest and say that a *möhsek* has taken its seat in either of these parts of the body. In a village I once met an old woman who had her right fore-arm paralyzed, evidently in consequence of a fit of apoplexy. She explained to me that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and had tied a dirty woollen band round the arm at the wrist so as to prevent the evil spirit from penetrating further into the body.

If the demon is allowed to complete his work of destruction in the

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761 body the patient will die, *i.e.* his soul will be compelled to leave its abode. The exertions of the medicine-man again are aimed at expelling the evil intruder.

755 To conjure a disease-demon, that is, to expel it from the body of the patient by incantations and other magical means, is in the Choroti language called *apáhu*. The conjurations nearly always take place in the night or after darkness sets in. This is due to the idea, referred to above, that the night is the special time of the evil spirits. The natives of the Chaco are strengthened in this belief by the fact that catarrhs and other ailments from which they suffer are as a rule worse during the cold nights, whereas in the day-time when the sun is spreading warmth they are less felt. The treatment of the patient takes place outside the hut, generally under a shady algaroba tree, the place where the men assemble for their meetings and drinking-feasts.

The procedure is always about the same. The medicine-man begins his treatment by spitting and blowing vigorously on the particular spot of the body where the evil is seated, and this action is from time to time repeated. This is done to »disinfect» the spot and to prepare it favourably for the extraction of the »arrow». Beneficial purifying effects [827] are commonly ascribed to the saliva, and a medicine-man's saliva is particularly sacred, being imbued with the magic power which fills his whole body. Thereupon the conjuration proper begins. The »doctor» leans over the patient, closes his hand so as to form a tube, puts it on the sick spot and starts to sing, in a low muttering voice, a monotonous chant, ejaculating certain powerful words addressed to the evil demon. The chant mostly consists of refrains; it is evident that the efficacy of the conjuration is mainly ascribed to the voice itself and the breath of the curer, as well as to the very rhythm of the chant. The words or phrases uttered by the Choroti medicine-man are very stereotyped; in fact, they almost invariably seem to consist of the words: *náuhea, náuhea. hiame, hiame . . . náuhea, náuhea, hiame, hiame . . .* incessantly repeated, and only interrupted by the blowing, spitting, and other manipulations. Both words belong to the particular terminology of the medicine-men; *náuhea* means »at night», and *hiame* »go away!» The whole conjuration may thus be translated into: »When night sets in, go away, evil demon!» The phrase has reference to the fact that the evil spirits which cause sickness are believed to move about especially at night, and the doctor is trying, by his conjuration, to prevent the demons from coming back at that critical time to molest the patient. Exactly the same idea appears

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in the conjurations of the Toba medicine-men, as we shall presently find. C 755

These conjurations are varied with other manipulations, above all with blowing, spitting, and rubbing the bad spot. Massage regularly forms part of the treatment applied by the Chaco medicine-men, and is the only action which may really have relieving effects. — Ultimately the doctor again leans over the patient and starts to suck vigorously the bad spot. He turns away, spits and hawks up and behaves as if he were going to vomit. Thereupon he takes something from his mouth and, turning to the bystanders, shows it to them: it is the arrow, consisting of a pebble, a piece of bone, etc. which he pretends to have extracted from the patient's body. The latter should now recover; but it may be that there are several of them in his body, or that a new arrow is sent into it which he will feel on the following night. Generally therefore the treatment must be continued for several evenings.

The Choroti medicine-men also invoke their guardian spirits (*mōhsek eis*), and if they succeed in extracting the arrow, this is said to be ultimately due to the assistance of their good spirits. The invocation of the »good spirit» in connection with the treatment of sickness is however a form of worship that I have studied much better anong the Mataco and the Tobas. C 755 776

The *Mataco* have exactly the same theory as to the nature of bodily disorders as the Choroti, ascribing curable »sickness» to possession by an *aittáh sláhsa* (a »little» *aittáh* or demon) and mortal epidemic disease to a *nahút*. The ultimate cause of sickness is witchcraft. To extract the »arrow» or splinter (*aláh*) discharged by the demon or his human controller is the ultimate aim of the medicine-man. But he cannot do it with his own powers, he needs the aid of his »good spirit», the *aittáh talák*. If the good spirit does not come down to his assisance, the patient is bound to die. The invocation of the good spirit, or the prayer, is therefore the last and decisive action of the medicineman's treatment of the sick person. M 753 755 776

Whereas the Choroti medicine-man does not generally use any magical instrument when he treats a patient, the particular instrument of the Mataco doctor is a sort of rattle, called *tahús*, consistng of a number of pieces of tin arranged round a circular piece of leather. When the instrument is shaken it produces a dull sound which is believed to inspire the spirits with fear. At certain other conjurations it is worn by the medicine-man like a cincture round the loins.

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755 In the operations of the Mataco medicine-man, more clearly than in the operations of the Choroti curer, we can distingush two different phases: firstly, the conjuration proper, (*tilahán jävús*) when the curer is trying to expel, by his incantations, the evil spirit from the patient's body; and secondly, the invocation of the »good spirit» (*aittáh talák*), who is besought to come down from the heavens and help the curer to extract the splinter. This act has the character of a prayer and is called *ihanéh*.

Generally it is easy to decide whether a conjuration or a prayer is in question. In the conjuration the medicine-man chants in a strong and commanding voice, and shouts and exclamations, likely to inspire the evil spirit with terror, frequently form part of it. In the prayer again the doctor chants in a low and supplicating, sometimes even trembling voice, as if he were trying to awaken the compassion of his guardian spirit. In this act the rattle is never used.

In opposition to what may be said for instance of the Toba medicine-man, the conjuration of the Mataco curer is not melodious but extremely monotonous and little attractive. He chants in a harsh and low voice, coming from the depths of the chest. As usual in the conjurations of the Chaco sorcerers, there are few articulate words to be distinguished; mostly the chant consists of refrains, such as *ai*, *ai*, *hoi*, *hoi*, *hai*, *hayi*, etc., which are incessantly repeated.

As to the conjuration proper, different medicine-men chant in somewhat different ways, but the procedure is essentially the same. There are the same operations in the form of spitting, blowing, rubbing the bad spot, sucking etc., varying with verbal conjurations and shaking of the rattle. The following is an instance of a conjuration which I witnessed:

Ai, *ai*, *ai*, *ai*, *ai*, *ai*,
Ai, *ai*, *ai*, *ai*, *ai*, *ai*,
hai, *hayi*, *hai*, *hayi*, *hai*, *hayi*,
hayá, *hayá*, *hayá*,
hai, *hayi*, and so forth.

The doctor interrupts himself from time to time, and starts to blow and spit and to shake the rattle close to the part of the body which is the seat of the evil.

In another case he pronounces with much vigour, the following conjuration:

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Hämák, hämóh, hämák hämóh,
hämák, hamóya, hämák, hamóya,
hämák, hämóh, etc.

Hämák means 'malicious', evil, and *hämóh* 'go away'. The meaning of the whole conjuration thus is: »go away, evil demon!» The phrase, being incessantly repeated in conjunction with the shaking of the rattle and other operations, is supposed to have the effect of forcing the demon to leave the body.

The Mataco medicine-men however generally try to make their conjurations of the demons of sickness more effective through *dancing*. Sometimes the doctor himself interrupts his incantations and other operations and starts to dance round the patient, sometimes other Indian men or women perform a savage dance round the patient while the curer leans over him. The dance which has for its object to conjure a disease-demon is called *Nahútsak* by the Mataco. The very name (drived from *nahút*, evil spirit) indicates the purely ceremonial character of this dance. There are however different forms of the *Nahútsak*. In some cases it is a sort of ring-dance; in other cases the Mataco by this name denote a dance of the same type as the *Nahót dónnaran* of the Tobas, which will presently be described. 755 535

To give the reader an idea of the Mataco dance *Nahútsak* in a case of sickness I may first borrow the following vivid description of a conjuration which the Italian explorer Pelleschi once witnessed in a Mataco village in the Argentine Gran Chaco. »In the midst of the tolderia», he tells us, »in a sort of open square, I saw a circle of black figures lighted up here and there by the flames of the great fire: these were women and men sitting on their heels silently smoking. Within the circle four robust men were running backwards and forwards within a space of about eight yards. Ostrich feathers and little bells were fastened to their ankles, wrists, heads and waists . . In their hands, which were always lifted up in gesticulation, they held small gourds, half-filled with grain, and these, being shaken, added to the din. They rushed about shouting and yelling, panting and sweating; thrusting out their legs, they stamped hard upon the ground, and then raised their voices in desperation, lifting up their arms, with head bowed and body curved. By turns two of them would stop short, and squatting on the ground would shake their heads rapidly from left to right, backwards and forwards, groaning, blowing, and spitting on the back, legs, head and face of two sick persons who had been

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755 535 placed in their midst .... The spectators remained to do honour to the treatment and increase its efficacy, but not without fear that the *ahút*, on quitting the body of the sick man might enter into theirs».[1])

This savage dance was typical of the Indian dances as far as they have the character of magical conjurations. The Indians firmly believe that they can terrify and expel the evil demon who has taken possession of the patient by violent movements and menacing gestures such as those just described. As to the ostrich feathers which the sorcerers had fastened to ankles, wrists, head and waist, some words of explanation may be added. The feather ornaments which the Indians wear in most of their dances and conjurations are not real ornaments but magical charms which eke out the powers emanating from the whole personality of the sorcerer. Like body-paintings, necklaces made of animals' teeth, rattle bells and gourds etc. they effectively help in conjuring the evil spirits.

The following is a conjuration accompanied by dancing which I myself witnessed in a Mataco village in the Bolivian Gran Chaco. Two Indian sorcerers were trying to cure a horse which was evidently badly attacked by an *aittáh* or *nahút*. The cure took place on various successive nights in an open place outside the *tolderia*. One of the sorcerers chanted in the usual way with his closed hand laid on the neck of the sick horse; the other both chanted and danced. Stamping with the feet alternately on the ground to the measure of his chant, he moved some ten steps away from the horse and then back again, repeating these movements several times. In his hand he held the rattle which he shook incessantly as an accompaniment to his dance and chanting. During the dance the man now and then took up a pebble or a small stick from the ground and threw it into the forest, spitting at the same time vigorously in the same direction. On the path where he moved he had laid some live embers. After a while the sorcerer interrupted his dance, stood close to the horse by the side of his colleague, and shaking the rattle heartily over the animal he shouted several times in a loud voice: *yame! yame! yame!*, that is to say, »go out, go out, go out!» These were the only words uttered during the whole conjuration. During his chanting the sorcerers only pronounced refrains such *hõ, hõ, hõ, a, a, a*, and so forth. The tune which the dancer again and again repeated and accompanied with his rattle was the following:

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[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 140.

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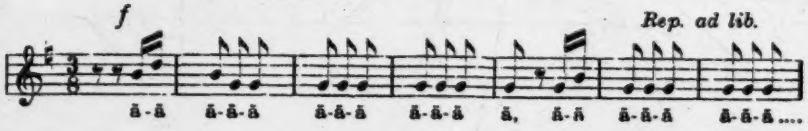

It is evident that the intention of the sorcerer was to drive away the evil demon into the forest in the direction in which he moved during the dance. With the same intention he threw the pebbles and spat in that direction. Again, the object of the embers placed on the path, as the Indians explained to me, was to burn the demon after it had been forced to leave the horse. — 755

The invocation of the »good spirit», an act called *ihanéh* by the Mataco, generally immediately follows the conjuration proper, but may also take place without a preceeding conjuration. It is an important act, since on the intervention of the good spirit the success of the whole treatment depends, but externally it does not differ much from a conjuration. At the »prayer», however, the rattle is never used. In all cases which came under my notice the chant or invocation of the good spirit was a chant without words. Evidently the medicine-man thinks that the tone of his voice alone is enough to move the compassion of the guardian spirit. 755 782

Thus, in one invocation of the good spirit which I witnessed the doctor again and again repeated the following refrains:

Am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum,
uh! am gaum, gaum, uh! aum, gaum, gaum, etc.

in another again he incessantly repeated:

ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho,
ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, etc., etc.

Lastly follows the usual extraction of the »arrow» or splinter, if the medicine-man has been successful in his invocation of the good spirit and the latter has come down to his assistance. Generally the doctor draws out the evil by sucking. He spits out the splinter on the ground, thereupon shows it to the bystanders, and declares that it is the thing that has caused the evil. The procedure is thus exactly the same as among the Choroti. 755

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756 I have studied the different phases of the treatment of sick people more thoroughly among the *T o b a s*. A medicine-man or sorcerer is in
[776] the Toba language called *yeyátten*. He is a person who has acquired a certain power and influence over the spirits by virtue of the intimate relation in which he stands to one particular guardian spirit whom he calls his »good spirit» (*peyák nõtta*). The word *yeyátten* means »one who knows» (about the spirits). The word itself indicates that to the Tobas medicine is a real art which, at least to a certain degree, can be acquired by learning. I do not know of special initiations for the medicine-men, nor, as far as I know, do any particular mental qualifications seem to be necessary for entering this profession. From what I have stated above — and this was particularly made clear to me by the Tobas — a medicine-man ought however always to be spiritually »strong» and possess a natural power of resistance against the evil spirits with whom he has to deal. According to the Indian view, the human body itself possesses a natural »power» owing to the spirit which animates or, rather, the vital and psychical energy with which it is filled and which is particularly concentrated in such parts as the hair and the nails, the blood, the saliva, etc. We have moreover seen that the magical power of the body is generally stronger in men than in women, and also stronger in old men than in youths. Although for this reason women as a rule play only a secondary part in religious ceremonies, there are, nevertheless, among the Tobas — as among the Mataco — female sorcerers also, but they have not great importance. I may add that they carry out their exorcism in much the same way as their male colleagues; but women can only cure female patients, whereas male sorcerers are able to cure men and women alike.

753 Like the Choroti and the Mataco, the Tobas account for all bodily
752 disorders by their theory of intruding spirits, *peyák*. The same theory of illness is adhered to even in purely surgical cases. If for instance a Tobas Indian cuts himself with a knife, he is likely to attribute the accident to the evil designs of a *peyák*; and if the wound does not heal, but gets infected and bad, it is immediately clear to him that a demon has entered into it or, as the phrase runs in such cases: *nóchingi nãtolík*, a »boy» has passed into the patient. Evil spirits attack even animals, and just as among the Mataco, it is no rare thing among the Tobas to see a man trying to cure his sick horse by conjurations.

755 The »arrow» or »splinter» is in the Toba language called *kaipák*, and the technical term for »extracting the arrow» is *nakát kaipák*. As is usual

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among the Chaco tribes, the Toba medicine-man begins his treatment with the conjuration proper (*empacherón*, 'conjuration', *empaché*, *pionák*, 'to conjure', 'to chant'). The instrument which he uses there is the *heligday*, a number of small bells attached to a circular piece of leather, which he shakes during his chant and to which some mysterious magical power is ascribed. Holding this instrument in his hand, and usually painted red or black in the face, the medicine-man comes to the patient, leans over him, puts his closed hand upon the spot on his body where the evil is felt, and starts his incantation. As is the rule in Chaco, the Toba medicine-man in his conjurations never utters many words, since the voice by itself is supposed to have a magical efficacy. Sometimes his incantation merely consists of ejaculations, but generally he pronounces a few words belonging to an archaic language or to the special terminology of the medicine-man, which are not understood by the common people without a special explanation.

A common conjuration in sickness is the following. The medicine-man leans over the patient and chants in a low voice:

Balaimi, balaimi, balaimi, balaimi,
balaimi, balaimi, balaimi, balaimi. etc.
laililá, laililá, lailí,
laililá — — — lailí, etc.

This chant is incessantly repeated, the words being pronounced slowly and expressively. During the chant the sorcerer now and then shakes his rattle close to the part of the body which is the seat of the evil. Sometimes he interrupts himself for a moment and begins to spit and blow on the same spot.

The words *balaimi*, *laililá*, *lailí* form part of the special medical terminology and mean the same as *nályi* = »in the night». To understand why the sorcerer again and again repeats this expression it is necessary to call to mind what has been stated before about the operation of the demons, namely that, according to the idea of the Tobas, they attack men only at night (*nályi*) and that in the day they do not exist, having then retired far from human habitations. It is the same with the disease demons. Since most diseases are really better in the day and worse at night, the Tobas believe that in the day-time the *peyák* do not as a rule attack the patients; but with the approach of night they return and re-enter the body. It is incumbent on the medicine-man to

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755 prevent this, and most incantations and prayers as a matter of fact
753 take place after darkness sets in. *Balaimi* is an elliptic expression and means about the same as: *nályi hämóh peyák*, »Go away in the night, demon!», or »Demon, do not come at night!». This chant, incessantly repeated to the accompaniment of the rattle, is supposed to keep off the invisible tormentor or to paralyse his actions.

755 Another time the medicine-man is heard to repeat over and over again
533 the following phrase:

Hemá — rá(l) — kohót, Hemá — rá(l) — kohót,
⏑ – – – ⏑ – ⏑ – – – ⏑ –

Hemá — ra — á — (s)ayim, Hemá — ra — á — (s)ayim.
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

This means:

»I send (the demon) away into the woods,
I send him into the woods;
I send him away, I send him away.»

In this chant also the words are pronounced slowly and with emphatic accentuation of certain syllables, as indicated above. The measure is marked by means of the *heligday*, which the medicine-man shakes the whole time.

755 Next, there follows the ceremony called *Tok tolýgin*. It is the expression used for that particular moment in the treatment of the patient when the medicine-man spits and blows upon the affected part of his body. This operation is undertaken in the beginning of the treatment and is repeated from time to time in the course of the operation. Its object is, as it were, to »disinfect» the sick spot and prepare it favourably for the extraction of the splinter.

755 Now follows the invocation of the *peyák nôtla* or »good spirit» (*ha-*
782 *yeyátten*).

The invocation of the »good spirit» may be a continuation of the conjuration proper, but also occurs as an independent ceremony. The medicine-man does not, in his operation, trust entirely to his own skill, but utimately expects help from that supernatural being over whom he has acquired a special influence. It is with the aid of his guardian spirit that he succeeds

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in »drawing out the splinter». The good spirit is invoked by means of a chant which differs somewhat in tone from the real conjuration; nor is the rattle used at this ceremony. Certain words are sometimes pronounced in this chant; sometimes, again, the tone alone indicates that a prayer is being uttered.

The following is an invocation to the good spirit. The medicine-man leans over the patient and chants in a low voice:

Ho! *Ligará, ligará, ligará, ligarái.*
Ho! *Muahá, ligará, ligara, ligarái.*

Or, with a somewhat different rhythm:

Hei. hei, hĭ, hŏ, o-hŏ, ligara
Hei, hei, hĭ, hŏ o-hŏ, ligara,
Ligara! Ligara! Ligara!, Ligara!
Hei, hei, hĭ, hŏ, o-hŏ, ligara, etc.

On another occasion we hear the following incantation. The medicine-man chants slowly and expressively:

Eiye, aeiye, eiye, aeiye,
Unghá, unghá, unghá, unghá.
Eiye, aeiye, eiye, aeiye,
Unghá, unghá, unghá, unghá.

Ligara is a formula of invocation and means the same as: *Adhóma peyák nŏtta nakát kaipák*, »Come, good spirit, to draw out the splinter!» The same is the meaning of the expression *eiye, aeiye* which, however, are probably not real words but merely refrains. *Unghá*, on the other hand is the same as *nówyi* = »he is coming». The medicine-man thus at first repeatedly invokes the spirit to descend from the heavens to assist him and thereafter immediately adds, as if to inspire himself with confidence, that he is coming. When translated into ordinary language the implication of the prayer is therefore:

»Come, good spirit, from the heavens to draw out the splinter!
Yes, he is coming, he is coming!»

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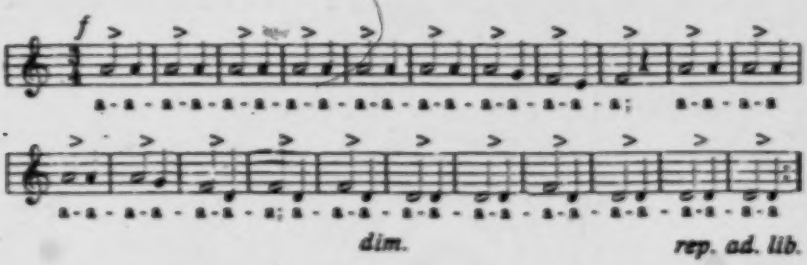
755 782 533 There is also a prayer to the good spirit which consists merely of a melodious chant, no words being pronounced. One of the medicine-men always used to sing this chant when he invoked the good spirit:



I am not quite sure whether this melody is genuinely Indian or borrowed. All Indians are very fond of music and of singing, but their own production within this sphere is very poor and they readily borrow from the whites what melodies they can, since they can use them in their conjurations.

755 782 An interesting action is the »propitiation» (?) of the demon (*Jamaranyin peyák*).

After the conjuration of the disease demon and the invocation of the good spirit there follows a peculiar ceremony. The demon, humiliated by the previous treatment, is slowly drawn out by the medicine-man from the body of the sick person in the form of a small splinter which he shows to the surrounding people. This moment is called: *peyák yuvóttak*, or *peyák uaiyi*, i.e. »the demon leaves». But it may be that he only leaves for a while or for that night, and that he will return the next night to continue his destructive work. To prevent this, further measures must be taken and they take the form of an apparently peaceful negotiation with him. Turning away from the patient and pretending to hold the spirit in his hand, the medicine-man converses with him in a low, muttering voice, directing, as it seems, various questions to him. Among other things he offers him tobacco, asking whether he likes to smoke. (*Koik? Koiaran koiaxaache?* »Do you want tobacco? Do you like to smoke a pipe!»). The medicine-man himself as well as the surrounding men answer these questions — on behalf of the spirit — by a nod of the head and a low mumbling. This conversation having gone on for a while, the medicine-man stops, and redeeming his promise as to the tobacco he lights his pipe and blows thick clouds of smoke upon the

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patient and all around. Thereafter he may finish his operation or start anew with a conjuration and prayer. The proceeding is repeated every night — in severe cases, though seldom, even during the day — until the patient recovers and the demon shows that he has no longer a desire to return at night to torment him. 755 782

The most interesting point in this ceremony is the offering of tobacco to the spirit. The Indians expressly declared that it is supposed to make the spirit »good», or to propitiate him. From this it seems that the tobacco is actually regarded as a gift to the demon, but this character of the offering is in fact rather pretended than real. Tobacco, like coca, Indian pepper, and many other similar plants, owing to their striking effects upon the human body and mind, hold an important place in the religion and superstition of the American Indians, and it is more than probable that tobacco was used among these natives as a magical means of expelling evil spirits before it became an object of enjoyment. The tobacco offering of the Tobas to the disease-demon has thus exactly the same magical character as the frequent coca offerings of the Quichuas and Aymara in the west, who for instance are in the habit of throwing bunches of coca leaves into deep gorges and other dangerous places in order to keep off the evil spirits inhabiting them. It is characteristic of the Indian way of dealing with such spirits that they give the ceremony the appearance of a real offering or gift to the demon, although it is in fact calculated to stupefy them and to keep them away. [781]

In regard to the treatment of sick people it must be added that although all medicine-men operate in much the same way, they may differ from each other in certain details. Thus one medicine-man may lay more stress upon the conjuration proper (*empacherón*), whereas another mostly has recourse to prayers (*hayeyátten*). But however a medicine-man may operate, the assistance of the »good spirit» is always considered necessary for a successful issue of the operation. Only with the aid of his *peyák nótta* is the sorcerer able to »remove the splinter». 755

Like their neighbours the Mataco Indians, the Tobas frequently try to eke out the efficacy of their conjurations by *dancing*. Dancing is especially resorted to in serious cases of illness, when other means have proved futile, or when an epidemic is raging. The kind of dance by which the Tobas conjure demons of disease is called *Nahót dónnaran* and seems to be but a variation of the ceremonial ring-dance called *Nahotti*. *Dónnaran* in the Toba language means 'to chant', 'to sing'; *nahót* (*nahút*) 755 535

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755 535 again, is the Mataco word for 'demon' or 'evil spirit' and has evidently been borrowed by the Tobas from their neighbours on the other side of the river. *Nahát dónnaran* thus simply means »to conjure a demon by singing». The name exactly corresponds to the true nature of the dance. — When in a certain case of illness the ordinary treatment of the medicine-man has failed to effect the desired result, the Tobas sometimes proceed to special measures. From all houses in the village men and women assemble in the evening outside the house of the patient, each of the men bringing his *heligday*, a sort of rattle composed of small bells attached to a circular piece of leather. The sick person is carried out from the house and laid upon the open place outside it. When night approaches the people begin to dance around him, marking time with their rattles. Jumping up and down with both feet at once and with knees bent they move forwards and backwards, to the right and to the left, yet always keeping round the sick person. They accompany their dance not only with the shaking of the rattle bells but also with chanting, or rather loud shouting; indeed, the main thing in the dance seems to be to make as much noise as possible. While the others dance, the medicine-man performs his particular office. Leaning over the patient he mutters a chant of his own, uttering certain powerful words and shaking his rattle repeatedly over the part of the body which is the seat of the evil. The whole ceremony is continued, with short intervals, until midnight.

751 535 The *Nahát dónnaran* is not only danced in actual cases of illness, but also with a view to *preventing* illness. The Tobas perform this dance especially in the month of October, at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the wet season, the object being to keep off an epidemic disease which is said particularly to attack the women. The dance is held on several successive nights, and elderly women especially, but also young girls, take part in it. A peculiarity of this dance, as of many other Indian conjurations, is that the performance is, as it were, a gradual one: the dancing, chanting, and rattling is at first slow and discreet, increasing gradually in strength until it reaches a climax, after which it again decreases. One of the sorcerers is heard gently shaking his rattle; soon he accompanies the »music» with a chant, uttered in a low voice; the chant and rattling grows louder and louder and the pace faster; finally he also begins to dance. Two, three, and more men join him in the dance, lastly even the women take an active part in the ceremony, at first only dancing, but soon chanting as well. The pace grows

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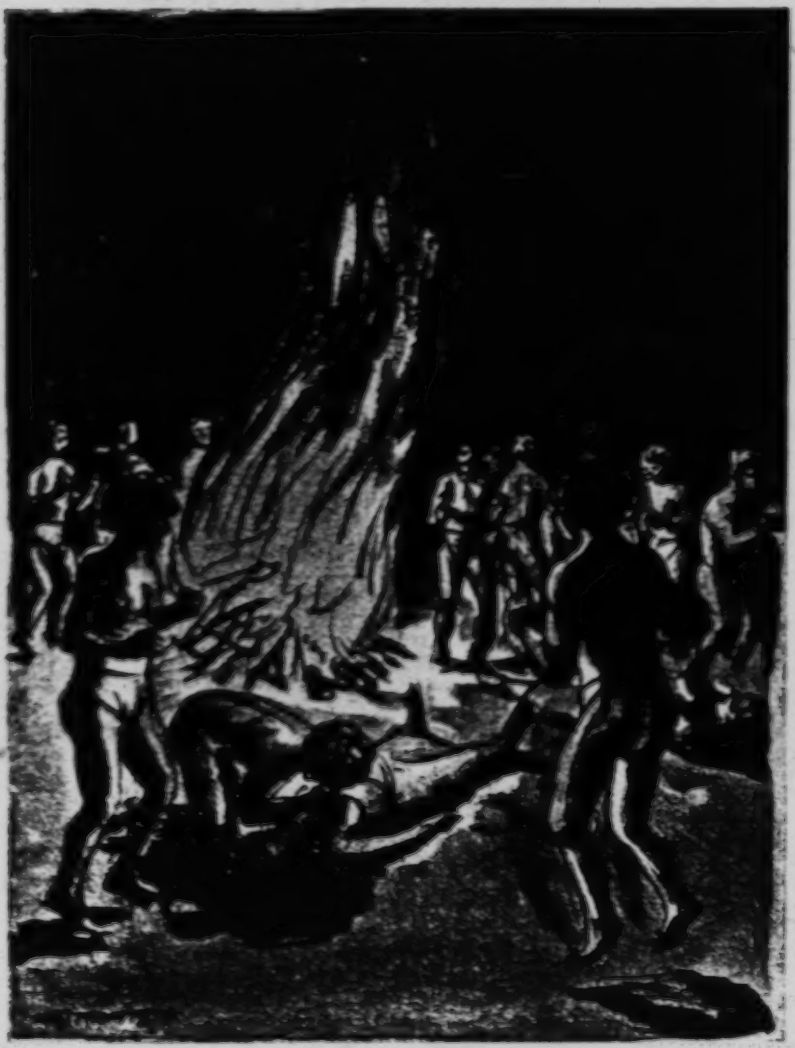

Painting by E. Wanström.

Nakót dónnaran, the night dance of the Tobas, performed to cure or prevent epidemic disease.

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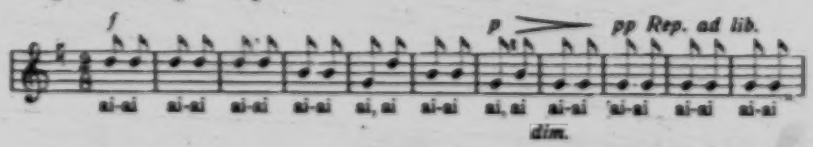
751 faster and faster and the whole dance more and more noisy. Suddenly
535 one of the women falls to the ground where she remains lying motionless as if she were dead; shortly after another woman falls down in the same way, then a third, and so forth. A medicine-man appears and begins to treat the women in the usual way as they fall, leaning over them, chanting, blowing upon them, and sucking them on the head and on the breast. The woman thus treated appears gradually to recover and after a while again takes part in the dance. In this way all of them are attended in due order by the medicine-man. While this particular conjuration goes on, the other partakers in the ceremony continue dancing around the »sick» women and their curer, stamping on the ground, yelling, and violently shaking their rattles. When the excitement reaches its highest point they no longer keep time, everybody dances as
751 he likes, keeping his own measure. In the chant no words are pro-
535 nounced, but only sounds are emitted like: ai-ai, ai-ai, ai-ai, ai-ai, or:
533 he-he, he-he, he-he, etc. There is, however, one dominant melody which is again and again repeated:



The first notes in this melody are always sung in a loud voice; then the voice gradually diminishes and the last notes, which are repeated *ad libitum*, are only heard as a low, distant murmur. Thereafter the chant is again repeated from the beginning, and so on.

While the main body of the dancers go on repeating this chant, one of the sorcerers, who seems to be the leader of the ceremony and moves about more than the rest, occasionally sings a somewhat different melody, his voice being heard louder than those of the rest.

751 The dance, which is generally in a very quick tempo, is of course
535 extremely trying in the heat of the tropical night. It is probably for this reason that the dancers appear almost naked, the men wearing only the usual small waist-belt, and the women a short petticoat round the loins. Still the sweat can be seen flowing down the naked bodies in streams. This sweating, however, seems to be desired and to form a part of the »cure»: it aids in the purification from the evil spirits. The dance, which is performed by moon-light or in the light of a big fire of pampas grass, sometimes goes on without interruption for nearly an

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hour. Then a pause is made, after which the noisy ceremony is again continued. Like most Indian conjurations, this dance goes on from the close of the day till about midnight. It is one of the most savage dances I have witnessed among the South American Indians and can only be compared with the night »victory-dance» of the Jibaros, performed round the head of the slain enemy.

It must be added that most of the persons who take part in this magical ceremony have their faces painted in one way or another, generally with the red dye obtained from the *urucú*-plant (*Bixa orellana*). Some girls may be seen with real ornamental patterns on their cheeks, representing, for instance, heads of arrows, teeth of animals, etc. These facial paintings, like all Indian body-paintings, have a purely magical significance: they serve to keep off the demons with which the dancers come into contact during the ceremony, and help to conjure them.

As to the significance of this dance, it is especially interesting because it is *prophylactic* in character. The women are not really ill; they only pretend to be ill and are treated accordingly. The Indians gave me the following explanation; at the end of the dry season their country is usually visited by an epidemic disease, which is attended with pains in the head and in the chest, and which especially attacks the women. This illness, according to the belief of the Indians, is caused by a great number of *peyák* (evil spirits) who visit the village at night, and the dance is intended to conjure them and keep them off. Evidently it is thought that when the women are treated *in advance* for the illness, this is an efficacious means of preventing them from really falling ill.

Among the Tobas it sometimes occurs that the patient *himself* dances to cure himself, naturally only in cases of comparatively slight illness. Once I witnessed such a dance, performed by two women who seemed to suffer from rheumatic pains in the breast and the shoulders. The women jumped up and down with the feet in the usual way, but without chanting and without using rattles. The dance was led by a sorcerer who chanted and danced at first slowly and then faster, accompanying himself with his *heligday*. The small dancing party was encircled by other Indian men and women who, sitting on the ground, accompanied the dancers with chanting and shaking of rattles. The concert gradually grew louder and louder, and ultimately developed into a dreadful noise. Having danced a while, the patients laid themselves down on the ground and a medicine-man began to cure them, performing his usual conjurations, while the other men and women continued their chanting.

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755 783 Whilst the dance went on another peculiar ceremony took place: a fire-brand was swung round in all directions on the place of the dance. A man then took the brand and carried it far into the forest chanting loudly, walked in a big circle and lastly appeared again on the scene of the dance, chanting incessantly.

The principal idea connected with the dancing of sick persons, as the Indians explained to me, is that the evil spirit is forced to leave the body with the perspiration. It is therefore essential that the patient should [827] go on dancing till he perspires abundantly. For the rest the principles of the dance are the same as in other similar conjurations. Again, the ceremony with the fire-brand was a purification ceremony, quite common among the Chaco tribes. Among the Tobas it is called *Koyadānatti*. The evil spirit which was being conjured had thereafter to be driven off [372] into the forest. Fire is generally considered by the Indians to be an extremely efficacious means of expelling evil spirits, and the above mentioned practice is especially resorted to when a death has taken place in the village.

751 535 Another prophylactic magical dance of the Tobas is the one known under the name *Nahóre*, »the Tiger-dance» (*nahóre*, 'tiger'). It is performed about the same time as the *Nahót dónnaran*. The persons taking part in this dance are young men and women, and the first impression is that it is only a game or pastime. They are arranged in a circle, boys and girls alternately. In the middle of the circle sit some elderly women. Each of the boys has a big cloth in his hand. Like other Indian conjurations the dance begins slowly, the tempo gradually growing faster. At first the dancers only walk one behind the other in a circle, each boy now and then lashing the girl in front of him on the loins with his cloth. Soon they begin to leap, faster and faster, and the lashes on the loins of the girls likewise follow quicker and quicker. Suddenly one of them falls to the ground where she remains lying motionless as if she were dead: then a second falls, thereafter a third, and so forth in the same way as in the *Nahót dónnaran*. A medicine-man, who represents the tiger, appears and begins to treat the girls in turn as they fall. He puts his mouth to the girl's breast, sucks it on two spots and blows on it, after which he spits out what he pretends to extract. Then he treats the head in the same way, sucking it and blowing on it. The girl thus »cured» appears to recover, rests for a while, and again takes dart in the dance. This procedure is repeated with all the girls succes-

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sively. The dance is continued with short pauses for several hours. Like most Indian dances it always takes place in the evening.

The *Nahôre* bears a certain resemblance to the *Nahát dónnaran*. It differs however from the latter dance in certain points. In the *Nahôre* no rattles are used, nor do the partakers in this ceremony chant or sing. They simply go on jumping, the boys lashing the girls, only now and then encouraging one another with exclamations and accompanying each lash of the cloth with an emphatic *sch!* Similarly the medicine-man who acts as tiger (*nahôre*), departs from his usual method of curing sick people in so far as he neither chants nor uses his rattle, contenting himself with sucking the patient on the supposed seat of the evil. While he wanders among the women curing them he now and then gives a sound resembling the grunting of the tiger when it roams about in the night searching for prey: *yānā, yānā, yānā.*

This pantomimic dance has much the same serious magical significance as the *Nahát dónnaran*: its object is to protect the women against the tiger or to save them from falling victims to it. This is effected by representing an encounter between them in a euphemistic way. The woman who has met the animal in the woods tries to escape from it by flight, but soon falls exhausted to the ground and seems hopelessly lost. But in the dance the tiger is a benevolent being. He does not harm the woman; on the contrary he cures her. The idea, in fact, seems to be that by the tiger itself remedying the evils which it inflicts, this will in real life be a safe-guard against the feared beast. To understand the ceremony fully we must know the superstitions the Indians have about the tiger. The Tobas, like most South American Indians who are acquainted with the jaguar, regard it as an incarnation of an evil spirit. It is commonly believed that certain persons are changed into jaguars after death, and this belief is confirmed when — as sometimes happens — the beast visits a village at night and kills some of its inhabitants. The way in which the girls are treated by the medicine-man in the *Nahôre* dance — by sucking, etc. — shows that the evil afflicting them is supposed to have been caused by a demon which has taken possession of them.

The cloth with which the boys lash the girls on the loins in this dance plays much the same part as the rattle in other dances. The object of the lashing is to purify the girls from the evil demon and to chase it away. Striking or lashing with a whip or a cloth is in South America largely practised as a means of purifying from evil spirits, and takes place especially at death feasts. The object of such lashing ceremonies

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751 is no doubt to purify the mourners from the death-demons which are
535 especially supposed to mix with the blood. The lashing with the cloth
783 in the *Nahôre* dance of the Tobas has a similar aim.

In this connection I may mention a ceremonial dance of much the
755 same kind, which was described to me by a Bolivian settler who had lived for some time in the land of the Tobas. An Indian man had been taken ill or had fallen a victim to some accident whilst wandering in the forest. He was carried home by his comrades, whereupon the following curative ceremony took place. The sick Indian lay on the ground groaning with pain. The other Indians started to dance round him, leaping on all fours, imitating in their movements and in the sounds which they produced certain big animals of the forest: one imitated the tiger, another the lion (puma), a third the fox, a fourth some other animal, and so on. Now and then the dancers stopped, leant over the sick man and began to suck at him and blow on the seat of the pain. — The close resemblance of this dance to the *Nahôre* just described is conspicuous. Evidently it
[825] was believed that a beast of the wood, or rather the evil demon incarnated in it, had caused the evil, and not knowing with certainty which particular animal it was, the Indians considered it necessary to represent several of them in the pantomimic dance. The principle in such ceremonies is, that when the animal itself cures the evil it has inflicted, recovery will follow with more certainty.

000 The idea of the Tobas, that certain animals, or animal spirits, may cause disease by entering into the body, is also found among other tribes in South America and seems to be especially common among the North American Indians.

755 A few more remarks may be made on the medicine-men and their treatment of the sick. We have heard about the »arrow» or »splinter» as the immediate cause of the sickness, and the extraction of it; but whence the object in question — the bone, the pebble, the thorn, the worm, the live insect, or whatever else it may be — originally comes, is difficult to decide. The Indian medicine-men have often, and especially by missionaries, been called conscious impostors who avail themselves of the credulity of their fellow-tribesmen to gain personal profit. In this way for instance Mr. Barbrooke Grubb characterizes the Lengua wizards. The greater part of their art, according to him, is pure deception, although he admits that to a considerable extent they are the victims of self-deception. There may perhaps be some difference between the Lengua wizards and the wizards of the Pilcomayo tribes, but to me it

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seems certain that for instance the medicine-men of the Mataco and the Tobas are by no means conscious impostors but exercise their art in good faith. They firmly share the belief as to the nature of sickness and its cure which is held by the whole people, and they are at bottom no more »impostors» than a medical man in a civilized society. As to the »arrow», I have already pointed out that although the medicine-man assigns the object in question as the direct cause of the sickness, he in fact means the *evil spirit* of which it is the embodiment. In order to expel the disease-demon he wants an object similar to the supposed »arrow», and this is the reason why he frequently has the very object ready beforehand which he pretends to »extract» from the patient's body.

It the efforts of the medicine-man are frustrated and the patient dies, the former does not, among the Chaco tribes, run any risk of being punished or, as far as I know, even blamed by the relatives. The failure of his operations is only regarded as a sign that this time the »good spirit» did not allow the sick person to recover but had decided that he should die. The medicine-man himself generally declares this to the relatives, who consequently give up hope of recovery. The wonderful resignation, with which in such cases both the latter and the patient himself submit to the inevitable, makes manifest that fatalism which lies at the bottom of the Indian's nature.

Of the Tobas Cardús relates that if the medicine-man declares that a patient whom he is trying to cure cannot recover, the Indians immediately kill him by striking him at the head with a club. According to the same missionary, if a Toba man had attained a very great age and his kinsmen suspected that his last hour was approaching, they did not wait for the burial until the end had arrived, but the women, amidst a great turmoil, seized him by the legs and the arms, dragged him outside the village and took him to a retired place where they had dug a narrow and shallow grave. There they interred him, still alive, in a seated position, pressing his head against the breast in order that he might die sooner in this posture. Thereafter they threw a little earth upon him, not waiting until he had drawn his last breath, and covered the tomb with a few branches of trees to prevent the wild beasts from exhuming and devouring the corpse. [1])

There is no reason to doubt the truth of this statement, which evident-

[1]) Cardús, *op. cit.* p. 265. See also Azara, *Descripción e historia del Paraguay y del rio de La Plata.* Asunción, 1896. tome I. 287.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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763 ly refers to a custom already abandoned by the Tobas. It reminds us
766 of a similar custom of the Choroti who, as I have stated have been in the
171 habit of killing old, decrepit men with an arrow-shot in the heart to prevent them from reappearing as evil death-bringing spirits. The fact that, as Mr. Grubb relates, the Lenguas have been in the habit of burying hopelessly sick patients alive shows that such cruel customs have been wide-spread among the Chaco tribes. Its motives, as I have pointed out before, [1]) are to be sought in superstitious fear. Among all Indians the spirits of old men — especially those of medicine-men and sorcerers — are particularly feared. If such a person is allowed to die a natural death, this means that the evil spirit who caused the sickness has wholly taken possession of his soul, identified himself with it, and changed the departed Indian into an evil, destructive demon. This, according to the idea of the Indians, can be prevented by giving such a patient a violent death before he is killed by the disease-demon. [2])

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751 Lastly, I may remark that there is not in the manipulations of the
755 medicine-man much that has the character of what we may call a »natural» cure, the only operations likely to give real relief being the massage of the sick spot and the suction, which in fact is sometimes so strong that it almost amounts to cupping. Various drugs and herbs are indeed used by the Chaco Indians for curative purposes and are not seldom alleged to have really healing effects [3]). These, however, are not exclusively used by the medicine-men; most elderly men seem to know about them. In the treatment of the professional medicine-men these remedies, curiously enough, seem to play but a subordinate part, magical conjurations being regarded as more important. — When a patient recovers in consequence of a medicine-man's »cure», as is not seldom the case, the phenomenon must first of all be ascribed to self-suggestion on the part of the patient, and the importance of this kind of »psychical treatment», in the case of primitive peoples, must not be underrated.

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[1]) See above, p. 112.

[2]) See below, p. 191.

[3]) Most »natural» remedies of the Chaco Indians are used for outward application, and they generally consist of decoctions made from certain leaves and roots. There is not much hygiene to be traced in the therapeutics of these Indians, nor do I believe that their remedies have much healing effect.

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Chapter XIV.

2. Other kinds of conjuration.

From what has been stated above of the social customs of the Chaco Indians, we realize that there is hardly any important event in the life of these natives which is not celebrated with religious or magical ceremonies of some kind. Generally these ceremonies are simple: drumming, the shaking of rattles, dancing and chanting form the main features in all of them. A few words may be said in this connection about the magical instruments, the *drum* and the *rattle*.

The drum, which is called *usyúk* by the Choroti, *huitsyúk* by the Mataco and *kaltaki* by the Tobas, is known to all Pilcomayo tribes, although it is nowadays little used by the Bolivian Tobas. It is a simple instrument, consisting of a small clay pot which is covered with a goat's or deer's skin. In beating the drum only one stick is used. Generally the pot is partly filled with water — a detail which I cannot exactly account for, since it has no perceptible influence upon the tone of the instrument. Probably the water is believed to eke out in some way its magical efficacy. The drum is the principal magical instrument of the Argentine Mataco who use the rattle gourd less, whereas, on the other hand, the Choroti, who also use both instruments, seem to appreciate the rattle more. In a Mataco village the drum is at work nearly every day: sometimes the spirit of a dead Indian is frightened away with it, sometimes other evil spirits, disease-spirits, spirits of hurricanes, tempests, drought, etc. are conjured with it; sometimes the Indians try to influence the good spirits animating trees and plants with it, so as to effect an abundant harvest of algaroba and chañar. The Choroti again mainly use the drum during the algaroba season, when the instrument is beaten both day and night. In a Choroti village where I lived for several months, an Indian sorcerer was specially engaged for this important ceremony.

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The object of the drumming was to »hurry on» the ripening of the algaroba and the chañar fruits, and at the same time to frighten away the evil spirits of hurricanes and tempests which frequently blight these trees at the time when they are flowering. Drought is another great danger to a rich algaroba and chañar harvet. By means of drumming the demons, who cause drought by keepingrain back, are conjured. In some cases it seems as if the drumming Indian, by the very time in which he is beating his drum, were imitating the fall of the rain-drops. The Choroti drummer seldom wears the rattle-belt (*tahús*), which on the other hand seems to be regarded as indispensable by the Mataco drummer. The latter, when he is beating the drum, continually moves his body up and down and from one side to the other in order that the rattle which he wears round the waist may make a noise.

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The other of the two principal magical instruments of the Chaco Indians is the rattle gourd, called *pésté* by the Tobas, *votsotáh* by the Mataco, and *pelite* by the Choroti. It consists of a round or oval bottle-gourd, hollowed out through a small opening in the tapering stem, and then filled with dry seeds, generally of tusca, small shells, beads, or other things producing a rattling sound. The outside is often ornamented with lines, triangles, squares, or other geometric designs. The instrument, when shaken, is believed to have a remarkable »power», which is partly due to the magical properties of the gourd itself, partly to the seeds or other things with which it is filled, partly to the geometric figures with which the outside of the gourd is ornamented. The instrument is used much on the same occasions and for the same purposes as the drum. I have stated, however that the *Choroti* not only use the *pelite* to frighten away or conjur evil spirits in general, but also for certain positive ends. To shake the rattle is in the Choroti language called *nekeālitse;* when it is shaken for a pecial purpose they use the expression *nekeālitse sīmā*, which means more or less: »to shake the rattle to obtain something». Thus I have mentioned that during the marriage and courtship dances such young men as are despised by the girls are in the habit of shaking their rattles in order to »hurry on» the latter and to have greater success in love. Similarly, when a young man goes out to find a bride in connection with the dances, his father at home continually shakes the rattle to »hurry on» the girls on behalf of his son and promote his important undertaking. There are many other instances of the same kind. When the Choroti women go out in the forest in the morning to collect algaroba beans for the brewing of the sacred beer or other wild

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The ceremony *Kou'uspük* among the Choroti. During the algaroba season the drum is beaten day and night with a view to shurrying ons the ripening of the fruits.

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Preparations being made for the great drinking-feast among the Choroti.
A goat's hide is fixed in the ground so as to form a vessel,
in which the beer is brewed.

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Choroti Indians assembled for a drinking-feast under a shady algaroba tree.

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fruits, their husbands at home shake their rattles the whole day in the belief that the rattling will help them to find and to collect great quantities of the important fruit. »Very soon will the woman be back with much algaroba». In the same way good luck is secured for a fishing expedition. Whereas the younger men go out to the river with their nets, the old men stay at home and »hurry on» the fish on their behalf by vigorously shaking their rattles.

It is difficult to make out exactly the train of thought underlying this curious custom. One might think that the Indians mean to frighten away, by their rattles, the evil spirits which impede success in an important enterprise, and in part it is no doubt so; but the chief idea seems to be another. The very movements, together with the »power» emanating from the magical instrument, are evidently believed to exert a direct, mysterious influence upon natural processes and even upon human thoughts and feelings. In other words, the effects seem to follow mainly on the principles of sympathetic magic. The same ideas, as we shall presently find, underlie the Indian dances in many cases.

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The *T o b a s* call the ceremony of shaking the rattle gourd *poketá danyakkó*. It is the general way of expelling evil demons which move about at night, causing sickness, tempests, thunder-storms, etc. Conjurations directed against evil spirits operating in destructive hurricanes and tempests are particularly frequent. Since these usually begin at night, conjurations with the rattle gourd always take place at that time. One of the medicine-men places himself outside the houses and chants a monotonous chant accompanying himself with the rattle. In these chants as usual, no words are pronounced; they merely consist in the repeating of sounds like a—a—a—a . . . ha-ha-ha-ha, etc. The power lies in the voice itself. The chant is always begun in a loud voice which is heard far away; then the voice gradually dies down so that the last tones are only perceived as a low mumbling; finally one can only hear the dull sound of the rattle which the sorcerer goes on shaking uninterruptedly. After a while he starts again from the beginning in the same way as before, and so forth. This conjuration is not seldom continued with a prayer addressed to the »good spirits».

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Various important incidents in the social life of the Tobas, such as the birth of a child, the initiation of young girls at the time of puberty, and deaths, are celebrated with *poketá danyakkó* conjurations. The most important occasion on which the rattle and the drum are used is, however, among all tribes *the preparation of fermented drinks*.

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We have already seen that the most appreciated of these drinks is algaroba beer, which by the Mataco and the Choroti is called *atās*, by the Tobas again *maplyi*. The tree itself and its fruit is called *oáh* in the Mataco and the Choroti language, in the Toba language *map*. The sacred beer is prepared with the utmost care and with certain religious or magical ceremonies. At this preparation there appears a strict division of labour between men and women. Although the women are not allowed to drink of the beer, they seemingly perform the larger part of the work. They collect the fruit in the forest, carrying it home in their large caraguatá bags, and afterwards mash it in mortars. Some old women start to chew the fruit, mixing it well with saliva, whereupon they spit it out into a goat's hide, fixed in the ground by means of sticks in such a way that it forms a sort of vessel. The goat's hide is used by the Choroti and by the Argentine Mataco, whereas the Tobas and the Bolivian Mataco use a wooden trough for the purpose. Lastly, hot water is poured over the mashed fruit.

MC 273 [467]

These preparations require nearly a whole day. The most essential thing still remains, namely the fermentation, and to effect this is a duty solely incumbent on the men, since women as a rule do not take part in conjurations. The fermentation is sacred, because it means the birth of the good spirit. Now this happens in the night, but night is the time when evil spirits move about. According to the belief of the Indians, the invisible persecutors appear in great numbers in order to prevent the birth of the good spirit and interfere with the drink so that it cannot ferment and is entirely spoiled. Therefore special precautions must be taken for the critical time. The brewing of the algaroba beer for the great festivals during the algaroba season is — especially among the primitive Choroti — a matter that concerns the whole community. Hence, at the approach of night, the men arrive from all houses with their rattle gourds, sit round the hide or trough, and begin to chant a noisy, monotonous song without words, shaking the rattles in the rhythm of their chant. This ceremony is called by the Choroti *nissanmaha oáh*, by the Tobas *niapilák map*, and its most conspicuous object is to prevent the spirits from spoiling the beer. Since the new moon is believed to promote fermentation, a moonlight night is preferably chosen for the ceremony. The chant is typical of the Indian conjurations in the Chaco. It is always begun in a loud voice; then the voice gradually dies down, so that the last tones are only heard as a low and distant muttering. Thereupon they start again from the beginning, and so forth. In addi-

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tion to the men shaking rattles, one or more Indians are beating drums and chanting. These noisy ceremonies are continued with short intervals during the whole night. When one party of Indians are tired and stop to rest for a moment, they are relieved by another party, since it is considered very important that there should be no interruption in the ceremonies; otherwise they would lose something of their effect. In the early morning the danger is believed to have passed; the fermentation has taken place, and the evil spirits have not been able to approach the drink and spoil it.

Although this negative object of the rites is particularly emphasized by the Indians, they also have a positive object which is indicated by the very expression »hurry on the fermentation». As we have already seen, the fruit of which the drink is made is believed to be animated by a spirit, and it is the same spirit that is active in the fermented, intoxicating beer. The rites described, while they are supposed to keep off evil spirits, are also intended to influence magically the plant-spirit itself and to bring it to its highest point of development, which is marked by the fermentation. This is partly effected through the chanting, the shaking of rattles, and the drumming, partly through the procedure of mixing the mashed fruit with saliva. The saliva really has the property of bringing about fermentation, and this phenomenon is explained by the superstitious Indian as due to the supernatural virtues which this secretion is believed to possess. Even the fact that only *old* women chew the fruit is probably not accidental. Old people have by nature a stronger magical power than the young and their saliva has therefore greater efficacy.

The Chaco Indians not only try to promote the growth of the fruits by shaking rattles and drumming, but also by *dancing*. Thus the Toba dance *Nahát dónnaran* is not only performed in cases of sickness, but also with a view to »hurrying on» the chanar fruit (*niapilák tákkai*). Once I witnessed such a ceremony. The chañar fruit — next to the algaroba the most important of the fruits growing in the Chaco forests — reaches maturity in the month of October and forms the staple food of the Indians during that month. The dance was performed in the following way. The fruit gathered in during the day was spread out on cloths or big hides on the ground outside the houses, where they are generally laid to dry. The dance took place at night. A young man began to dance alone, stamping alternately with his feet on the ground, without using any rattle, and chanting at first in a low voice. Gradually his movements

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grew faster and faster, and the chanting accompanying them louder and louder. Soon he seized his magical instrument, the bell rattle called *heligday*, and shook it at first slowly and gradually faster, keeping time with his steps. When the dance reached its culmination, the feet of the dancer moved with intense rapidity, the chanting developed into an inarticulate yelling, and the man seemed to be in a real state of ecstasy. The other men also began to take part in the dance, accelerating their movements as well as their chanting gradually like the principal dancer, and accompanying themselves with their rattles. In this way the noisy performance was continued for several hours. Its object, as the Indians told me, was to promote the ripening of the chañar fruit. The dance seemed to have particular reference to the fruits already gathered, since the effect of all similar Indian dances usually follows on the principle of *pars pro toto*. The Indians evidently believe that the fast movements of the dancer in connection with the chanting and rattling are able to exert a mysterious influence upon the spirit animating the fruit, and the influence is not limited to the fruits gathered at the moment, but according to magical principles is believed to be extended to all plants of the species.

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Similarly the *Mataco* try to promote the processes of nature by dancing. Typical of this was a dance which Mataco and Choroti Indians once arranged in common at the sugar factories in northern Argentine, where they were employed as labourers to cut the cane. The dance was a kind of *Nahûtsuk* the object of which was to hurry on the ripening of the sugar plant. The Bolivian Mataco, some of which cultivate the sugar cane, are known to perform this magic dance in their own land too. A bundle of sugar canes, tied together, was held by two Indians in an erect position on the ground. Round these men the other Indians formed a circle. The women joined in, forming a larger circle behind the men. All started to dance, moving round the canes, stamping alternately with their feet on the ground and chanting with a loud voice, keeping time with their steps.

This magical dance to promote the growth of the sugar cane is obviously based on the same principle as the Toba dance just mentioned: the few canes round which the Mataco Indians performed their dance represented the whole field of sugar cane. The idea evidently underlying the rite was that after these specimens of the plant had been properly prepared — *i. e.* the indwelling spirit influenced in the desired direction — the rest of the canes in the fields were likewise favourably influenced.

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Choroti SK6

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I have so far only spoken of the dances and other rites which take place at the preparation of the sacred drinks. During the algaroba season, festivals are held almost continuously, and these festivals are chiefly celebrated with drinking-bouts and dancing. Those of the Chaco Indians who have been in contact with the whites and seen the great festival with which, in Argentine and Boliva, they celebrate their carnival in February say that the algaroba season is their own carnival time and that they, too, have their carnival dances. The dances which among the Choroti take place at that time have partly been described before in connection with the customs practised by these Indians at courtship and marriage. In addition to the customary courtship dance *Avúshe*, the great festival, which is called *läkinene*, is celebrated with two more dances, those called *Ahlénta* and *Jóhlöki*. *Jóhlöki* is the name by which the Choroti call the Tobas, a fact that seems to indicate that the Choroti have borrowed the dance from their neighbours. The Tobas themselves call the dance *Nahotti*. It is a ring-dance; the dancing men are arranged in a circle and have their arms round each other's waists, moving round to the right or to the left to the rhythm of a chant. The *Ahlénta* again is identical with the Toba dance *Nomi*. Nevertheless, the Choroti seem to have borrowed it from their southern neighbours, the Ashluslay Indians on the lower Pilcomayo, a fact that may be inferred from the name; for just as *Jóhlöki* means »the Toba dance», so *Ahlénta* means »the Ashluslay dance» (Choroti *Ahle* = Ashluslay). I would add in this connection that the dances of the Chaco tribes are, in the main, common to all the tribes; there are certain dances which occur among different tribes under different names.

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The chants sung at the dances are rather monotonous and are composed of a series of words which apparently have no meaning; for instance in the *Jóhlöki*:

Hä-e-sa-alia,
Hiáh-hia-ália,
He-éh-hia-ália, *hia-ália*,
Hi-áh,
Hä-he-éh, *hä-he-éh*,
Hä-se-éh, *hä-se-éh*, *hä-se-éh*, etc.

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Only the younger unmarried men perform these dances, the older ones being constantly engaged in drinking algaroba beer (*atäs*). Unmarried girls are allowed to be present, but as we have seen they do not as a rule

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take part in the dances, although courtship is connected with them. After the dances sexual intercourse is indulged in by the partakers in the festival, each girl choosing for herself a lover for that night among the dancing men.

Nordenskiöld mentions the Choroti as an instance of Indians who have purely profane dances, pointing out that they have special reference to the sexual life. The latter of course is true of some dances; but Nordenskiöld's mistake in regarding the Choroti dances as purely profane is due to the fact that he did not study their customs thoroughly and therefore failed to see the ideas underlying them. In fact, it is clear that the Choroti dances are gradually losing their original magical or religious significance and have a tendency to degenerate into mere amusements, a course of development which we frequently notice with regard to Indian customs. But even the Choroti dances still, in the main, retain their ceremonial character. Thus my Indian informant, an elderly man, told me that when the Indians dance they collect the whole supply of fruit gathered for the occasion in the house of an old man, i.e. a man initiated in the magic art; and *they believe that the dancing will make the fruit abundant* — not only these particular fruits, but those growing in the forest as well. The principle is again the same as in the Mataco dance to promote the growth of the sugar cane and in the Toba dance to make the chañar fruit abundant. As we have seen, the drumming, practised by the Choroti and the Mataco during the »season», has to a certain extent a similar object. That the chanting which accompanies the dances has at the same time for its object to frighten away evil spirits, is evident.

From this point of view it is interesting to compare the ceremonies performed by the Choroti during the »season» and the sexual liberty connected with them with certain »mysteries» of a similar kind practised by some Indian tribes in other parts of South America. Thus the Yurupary ceremonies of the Uaupes Indians in north-western South America present a close analogy to them. Among these tribes also certain mysterious ceremonies, consisting chiefly in dancing, are performed at those seasons of the year when the most important fruits reach maturity. The object of these ceremonies appears to be to influence the spirits which are thought to animate the plants and thus to promote fertility. Many facts show that these spirits are nothing but souls of the dead which have taken up their abode in the trees and plants. Moreover, at these mysteries sexual intercourse is promiscuously indulged in by those

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taking part in them, evidently with a view to propagating the useful plant spirits and giving them an opportunity to enter into the women and to be reborn in human form.[1])

I believe that in the Choroti dances performed during the algaroba season and the sexual licentiousness which forms part of them we have in fact remains of similar mysteries in the Chaco, which for one reason or another have partly lost their original significance, having now at the outset only the general character of joyful harvest festivals.

Again, the great festival dance of the Tobas is the *Nomi* already mentioned. It is performed on all particularly solemn occasions, but especially during the algaroba season. It is the great »carnival» dance of the Tobas. Even some time before the proper season begins the Indians start to dance, believing that by dancing they can accelerate the ripening of the fruits (*niapilák map*), just as the Mataco and the Choroti believe that they can hurry on the ripening of the fruits and the coming of the season by beating drums. In dancing the Indians arrange themselves in a long line, or so as to form a crescent. With arms interlaced round each other's waists they move, running alternately to the right and to the left and at the same time forwards to the other end of the dancing place where the chain is broken. Thereupon they move back in the same way. As is customary in the Chaco, the dancers themselves chant the measure of their steps in a loud voice. Similarly the women do not take part in the dance although they are allowed to be present as onlookers. — During the season the dance goes on daily and is believed to influence continually the growth of the fruits.

But the *Nomi* dance is performed during the algaroba season with another object in view also. The Tobas believe that at this happy and joyful time they receive invisible guests in great numbers. These are the *kadepakól* or *ilúk*, i.e. the spirits of departed Toba Indians, who also want to be present at the joyful festivals and to take part in the drinking-bouts. But these guests, who are feared or at any rate awake uncanny feelings in the living, are not welcome and do not receive any sort of cult. On the contrary, measures are taken to keep them off, and the Indians told me that precisely this is part of the object of the dance *Nomi*. The dancing men by means of their movements and their loud chanting prevent the spirits of the dead from approaching the villages or the place where the drinking and feasting goes on.

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[1]) See my *Civilization of the South American Indians*, pp. 427 sqq.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI/2

T 535 789 A peculiarity of the *Nomi* is that it is the only Toba dance which takes place in the day-time; in fact, it is *always* performed during the day, just as other dances are always performed at night. Of the reason of this I am not quite sure, but it is probably to be sought in the particular character of the dance. Most Indian dances are in their nature conjurations of evil spirits, and since these spirits move about especially at night, it is conceivable that the dances are, as a rule, night ceremonies. The dance *Nomi* again, chiefly has for its object the promotion of fertility and the ripening of the algaroba fruit and therefore takes place in the day, just as the Choroti dances, in so far as they have the same object, often take place in the day. It is true that the *Nomi* is also intended to conjure the ghosts of the dead, but these differ from other spirits precisely in that they are generally believed to visit their living relatives in the day-time, when the drinking-feasts are celebrated.

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M 784 535 The Mataco also have their festival dance, which in their language is called *Nakătin* or *Katinăh*. It corresponds exactly to the Toba dance *Nomi*, and is performed during the algaroba season with the same object, namely, to secure an abundant harvest and to keep off the spirits of the dead, called *kusĭtak* by the Mataco.

M 171 Whether the Mataco have been influenced in this festival dance by their neighbours the Tobas, with whom they have considerable intercourse, I cannot say, but the idea that the dead like to visit the living at the time of the harvest and at the great drinking-feasts, is certainly familiar to many South American tribes. Thus the *Avas* and the *Chănĕ*, who now live on the western border of the Chaco, but came originally to these regions from the north and cannot be reckoned among the Chaco tribes proper, especially practise dancing at their drinking-feasts. Since on this particular point there is an interesting analogy between the customs of the Avas and those of the Chaco tribes, I shall mention what I know about the drinking-feasts of the Avas and the Chané. Their sacred drink is maize beer, called *cangŭi* in the Guarani language, which exactly corresponds to the sacred beers brewed from the algaroba and some other fruits in the Chaco. The *cangŭi* festivals of the Avas as well as the dance performed in connection with them have been described by the Catholic missionaries, but none of them seems to have realized the religious significance of these ceremonies. The majority of these Indians are now Christians in name and strongly influenced by Christian civilization, having consequently dropped or greatly modified many of their ancient customs. I myself have only witnessed their

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dances at the carnival of the whites, in which the Avas sometimes take part, performing their old native festival dance.

The great drinking-feasts (*arete*) of the Avas and the Chané took place annually after the maize harvest. Both men and women took part in them, all being assembled round a large and beautifully ornamented clay vessel (*yumbui*), filled with the sacred maize beer. At first they drank ceremoniously, keeping silence for about two hours. Suddenly they stood up and started to dance and chant. Two of the oldest chiefs or medicine-men, who led the dance, stood in the middle holding the *yandúa* (*yandu* = ostrich), a sort of dancing-staff, about four meters in length, with big ostrich plumes attached to the top, and arranged in such a way that the whole thing looked like a huge umbrella. With this staff the leaders marked time during the dance, by striking it hard on the ground. Round them the other men ranged themselves, and behind the men the women, holding each other by the hands and forming a larger circle. The dancing of the former consisted in bending the right knee a little and straightening it again keeping time with the *yandúa* which was continually moved by the leaders; the dancing of the women, again, consisted in taking alternately one step backwards and another step forwards, each step being accompanied by a slight inclination of the body. The song chanted during the dance was rather monotonous and, like most Indian chants, difficult to describe.

There are several details in this dance which plainly reveal its religious character. Thus the *yandúa* is a magical dancing-staff of the same kind as is found among many South American tribes. The staff helps to conjure the spirits and its magical power depends essentially on the ostrich feathers, which as a matter of fact are commonly used as charms by the Indians, especially in Chaco. The same may be said of the rest of the equipment which was deemed necessary on such occasions. Among the Chané in northern Argentine, who for centuries have had the same culture and much the same religious ceremonies as the Avas, I found a curious festive dress made solely of ostrich feathers [1]) which, according to the statement of the Indians, was formerly worn at their great *cangúi* feasts and dances. Broad bands of big ostrich feathers tied together were attached to the head, to the breast, and to the stomach, hanging down also over the thighs, so that almost the whole body of the dancer was covered with the feathers, which gave him a very fantastic appear-

[1]) This feather dress is now in the ethnographic museum of Helsingfors.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

600 ance. The older Indians still knew that the object of the dance at which this dress was worn was to conjure the spirits of the dead, the *añas*, who were believed to come in great numbers to the annual drinking-feasts with the intention of taking part in these joyful entertainments. But the ostrich dress was not the only thing worn on these occasions. Masks were also worn and rattles of hard shells were tied round the legs. The masks and the rattles, together with the ostrich dress and the *yandúa*, formed a real magical apparatus intended to drive off and conjure the unwelcome guests. We know that masks are especially worn by the Indians at death-feasts and that they are, or at least originally have been, purely magical things comparable to drums, rattles, etc., with which supernatural beings are influenced. Even in our days the Avas and Chané use masks at the carnival of the whites in connection with the dance performed on that occasion. They are rudely carved out of a soft kind of wood into the likeness of a human face and are afterwards, according to a common Indian custom, thrown away or destroyed. The mask, which has been tabooed or infected because of its contact with the dangerous spirits, can no longer be used.

The participation of the half-civilised Indians, with their native religious ceremonies, in the carnival of the whites, is an interesting phenomenon. It shows us the amalgamation of a Christian and a purely heathen festival, an amalgamation which of course is psychologically possible only under the assumption that there is an intrinsic connection between them.

226 535 As to the magical dances of the Chaco Indians, I may mention that the Mataco and the Choroti have a dance, the particular object of which is to secure good luck in fishing. The Mataco call this ceremonial dance *Vúokoi*, the Choroti again *Siyúks*. *Siyúks* is the name of the kind of fish called *bocachico* in Spanish, the most common fish in the Pilcomayo river. Fishing is the main livelihood of the tribes who have settled on the banks of the river, and the fishing season proper begins at the end of May or the beginning of June, when the dry season in the strict sense begins and the water in the river is low. I have not seen this dance performed, I have only been told about it by the Indians. It is a sort of ring-dance, the Indians making movements in quick time round a live fish placed on the ground, while an Indian standing outside the circle tries to catch the fish. Immediately after the dance is finished the Indians run down to the river, and, thanks to the dance, will have good luck. The dance is believed to have the power of making the fish

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assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets. 226 535

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Avúshe*, when the young men try to »hurry on» the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the »power» lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings. 789 535 533

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: »These spirits ... fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the tolderías (villages) or round the toldos (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm.»[1] This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible. 789 535 [776]

[1]) Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.

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sible. I may add here that the Choroti men are in the habit of wearing round their neck a kind of flat whistle made of wood and ornamented with incised figures. With these whistles they produce shrill sounds from time to time during the dances, which are supposed to imitate the sounds of the spirits and have the power of frightening them away.

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How the Indians believe themselves to be able to influence even natural processes by imitating them, appears in an interesting way from the following curious ceremony which I witnessed among the Choroti. These Indians cultivate the maize only on a very limited scale, and it is among them a rare cereal. In a village the women had obtained some maize and were cooking it on the open place outside the huts. While the maize pots were boiling, the women sang in a loud, quavering, guttural voice, which it is impossible to describe exactly, an extremely monotonous chant, which was evidently meant to imitate the monotonous sound and the regular, bubbling movements of the water boiling in the pot. The women explained to me that *in this way the pot would boil well and the maize soon become soft*. The chanting was thus a means of »hurrying on» a natural process according to the same magical principles as we have noticed in several other cases.

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Chapter XV.

Prayer and offering.

Prayer and offering form the main elements of religious worship or cult, and of such a cult only few traces are to be found among the primitive tribes east of the Andes. Still I have pointed out that the invocation of the »good spirit» in the treatment of sick persons really has the character of a prayer, and this is particularly the case among the Tobas. The Tobas are also the only Indians in the Gran Chaco, or at least on the river Pilcomayo, who make a primitive kind of offering by which the spirits are propitiated. The little I have to state about prayer and offering among the Pilcomayo Indians therefore has exclusive reference to the *Tobas*. 182

To pray is, among the Tobas, called *hayeyátten*, and by this expression the Indians first of all indicate the invocation by which the medicine-man summons his guardian spirit to help him to subdue the evil demons. How the medicine-men pray when they are curing sick people, we have already seen. It is a kind of chant in which sometimes a few words are incessantly repeated, sometimes again, no real words are pronounced, the devotional tone alone indicating that a prayer is being made.

When a medicine-man cures a sick person it is as a rule only the former and not the patient that prays to the deity. In prolonged cases of sickness it is, however, no rare thing to see suffering patients themselves praying to their guardian spirits for help and alleviation. A common prayer formula in such cases is the following:

Agai nō, achi mah hey.

the meaning of which is about this:

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782 »(Good spirit), let no more evil befall me, I have already suffered much!»

Or, in an abbreviated form:

Agai nōtta,

»I suffer, may (the good spirit let) the evil subside!»

On one occasion I saw a young Toba man, who had suddenly turned almost totally blind on account of some severe disease of the eyes, saying this prayer to his good spirit. Sitting on the ground, with his head bent down and with trembling knees, he repeated these words in a low voice for many hours.

In other cases of affliction, prayers to the good spirit are made much in the same way, but it is only seldom that one is able to be present at this worship and to hear clearly the words that are uttered. Sometimes the ceremony begins with a conjuration (*poketá danyakkó*) directed against the evil spirits and is thereafter continued with a prayer addressed to the good spirit. Thus once I witnessed a conjuration in the evening performed by a sorcerer with the rattle gourd, the object of which was to prevent the feared outburst of a hurricane which would be destructive to the flowering trees. Having shaken his rattle and chanted for a while the sorcerer stopped. A little while later on, the miauling of a cat, the sacred animal of the *peyák nōtta*, was heard and he at once continued with a prayer chant addressed to the spirit. That he was saying a prayer could readily be inferred from the devotional tone and the absence of any rattle accompaniment. The chant soon developed into a real conversation with the deity, carried out in a low voice. The words uttered could not be distinguished, but the spirit was besought to be good and to keep off the destructive demons from the village. — The Indians stated that such prayers are sometimes made in order to stop or prevent foul weather.

When afflicted by a heavy sand-storm or tempest the Tobas are also in the habit of uttering the abbreviated prayer formula:

Agai, nōtta,

»It hurts me (I suffer), may the evil subside».

782 Lastly, the Tobas prepare themselves for a war expedition or battle
726 not only by different kinds of conjuration, but also by prayers addressed to the *peyák nōtta* of the war.

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Toba SI12

Real sacrifices are completely unknown to the Tobas as to most other South American Indians, and about other kinds of offerings there is not much to say. I have mentioned the tobacco offering which the Toba medicine-men are in the habit of making to the disease-demon when expelling him from the body of the patient. As pointed out, this offering is only apparently a gift to the spirit; its real object is to stupefy him and to help to subdue him, since the tobacco is regarded by the Indians as a powerful antidote against evil spirits. Such magical offerings are quite common in South America.

The guardian spirits which most Toba men are believed to possess are not only propitiated with prayers but sometimes also with real offerings. The spirit seems to be somewhat capricious and does not always listen to the prayers addressed to him. It happens therefore, that a Toba Indian, when afflicted with a severe disease, begins to negotiate with his tutelary deity, promising to give him a gift, for instance a mantle, a waist-belt, or some other valuable thing as a reward if the will come and cure him. The Indian puts these things in a bag and hangs them up in a tree or some other place outside the house as offerings to the deity. — These votive offerings for recovering health are the only kind of sacrifice customary among the Pilcomayo Indians.

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Choroti SK6

CHAPTER XVI.

Ceremonial fasting.

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Fasting or restrictions in diet play an important part among the religious practices of the Chaco Indians. In most cases ceremonial fasting seems to be due to the belief that in eating man may come in contact with dangerous disease-bringing spirits which are in some way associated with the food. Since harmful spirits are supposed to have a special liking for certain kinds of food, these kinds of food are in some cases taboo to the Indians. The common belief that the spirits of the dead reincarnate themselves in various animals has in the first place given rise to all sorts of food restrictions, for the meat of such animals is generally, although not invariably, regarded as taboo.

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The Indians of the Gran Chaco, dependent upon very restricted sources of subsistence, as a rule utilize everything that can possibly be used as food. Thus several animals are eaten which we do not regard as fit for food, and if a certain animal is despised, this is, as a rule due to superstitious ideas of one kind or another. The *Choroti* for instance among other things regard such animals as locusts, certain beetles, lizards, and a kind of rat as delicacies; of others the fox is considered edible, as also of birds the owl and a certain kind of vulture (called *caranchо* in Spanish, *Polyborus vulgaris*). In regard to the fox, the owl, and the vulture, however, there is the restriction that only old people can eat them, not young people and children, whom such food would do harm. In several cases I received from the younger Choroti men the explanation: »The old ones can eat the meat of this or that animal, not we». This means that such animals or birds as those just mentioned are in some way associated with evil spirits; the eating of the meat of these animals therefore would have disastrous consequences for young people and children who have less power of resistance against evil

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spirits, but not for old men who are initiated in the magic art and know how to render them harmless. — It is curious that on the other hand an animal like the *deer* is regarded by the Choroti as absolutely unfit for food. Not even old men would touch the flesh of deer, believing that if they did, they would die. This is due to the belief, mentioned before, that the deer is an evil spirit (*möhsek*), the reincarnation of the spirit of a sorcerer, a superstition which is widespread among the South American Indians and everywhere manifests itself in an aversion to eating the meat of this innocent animal.

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Ceremonial fasting, as we have seen, is prescribed among the Choroti and the Mataco on certain occasions which are regarded as important and critical in some respect. Thus the father has to restrict his diet when he is lying in couvade, and girls have to diet during their first menstruation. We have also seen that behind these practices there is the fear of evil spirits in one form or another.

If disease and death bringing demons are believed to enter easily into the body with the food eaten, we can understand why eating is so often to the Indians a ceremonial business. This is also intelligible from the point of view that by eating an animal and coming in contact with its soul, a man may acquire the spiritual qualities of that animal. This idea explains the curious custom practised among the Tobas, that when a chief's daughter attains puberty, the men alone have to eat the meat of the ostrich, whereas the women eat the meat of the armadillo. As a general rule, both among the Tobas and among other Chaco Indians, men and women do not eat together but separately, the men first and the women afterwards. This custom is observed so strictly, that one may assume a particular superstition behind it. Moreover, when the Indians eat, they do not speak much with one another and do not like to be spoken to. Since they believe that man may evade evil spirits by keeping silence and avoiding attracting their attention, it is possible that the ceremonial character of their banquets is partly connected with this idea. And as women are especially believed to attract the spirits, this may be, or may originally have been, one reason why the men avoid eating with them. But it should also be remembered that in primitive societes eating together is believed to establish a mysterious union or connection between all those taking part in the common banquet. Since a strict distinction is made between a man's and a woman's spiritual qualities, it is not difficult to understand that the men avoid the company of the women on those occasions when they eat. However

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this may be, it is now impossible to get a positive explanation from the Indians themselves as to their real motives for observing this ancient custom.

The dietary rules observed by the *Tobas* are in many respects more detailed than those of other Chaco tribes. I have mentioned for instance that when a girl reaches the age of puberty she is bound to fast strictly, being particularly forbidden to eat fish and meat. On the other hand, she is enjoined to eat the leaves of the tusca tree and the leaves and fruit of the vine which the Tobas call *charóde*. These leaves and fruit probably possess some magical properties which are believed to have beneficial effects upon the girl. Dobrizhoffer, speaking of the puberty customs of the ancient Abipones, mentions that the girl had to abstain from fish and meat and was only allowed to feed on «a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the bloods». By this fruit he evidently meant the tusi-fruit (*charóde*) which is eaten on the same occasion by the Toba girls of the present day.

Among the Tobas and the Mataco, and probably also among the Chorotí, a woman is always bound to diet during her menstrual periods, since she is at these periods more or less exposed to supernatural dangers. The Toba woman carefully abstains from eating fish, and her only food is a dish prepared of boiled maize and called *eudái* in the Toba language. An infringement of these rules would be likely to bring about the terrible consequences which have been mentioned above. Similarly, when a child has been born in a family, both the father and the mother of the child must live on a restricted diet.

Again, after a Toba man has died, his widow, daughter, and other female relatives carefully avoid eating fish. If they infringe this rule, they will, according to the belief of the Tobas, sicken and die or go mad. Instead of fish, maize is eaten. Even some of the men observe the same custom, abstaining from fish for some time after the death of a relative.

All these food restrictions are, no doubt, based upon the same idea, namely, that evil spirits may hide in the forbidden food and gain entrance into the body if it is eaten. At any rate spirits are in some way associated with the food. With regard to the fish this is expressly stated. It is a curious fact that fish, which is the principal food of the Tobas, is so religiously shunned on certain occasions. Behind this superstition there are undoubtedly real experiences as to the harmful effects that the eating of fish may bring. Thus the Tobas assert that incautious-

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eating of fish at the beginning of the wet season is likely to cause malarial fever. What is particularly dangerous in the fish, as the Indians told me, is the stomach; an evil spirit may hide in it. Therefore a person must abstain from eating this kind of food when he or she is in a delicate condition and exposed to the attacks of supernatural enemies. After a death it is the death-demon that is believed to have possibly taken up its abode in the stomach of the fish. In general, the rules of diet, both in regard to fish and in regard to other kinds of food, are always more strict for the women than for the men, and this is naturally due to the belief that the former have by nature less power of resistance against evil spirits than the latter.

Several other food restrictions exist among the Chaco tribes, and most of them are due to superstitious ideas of one kind or another. Just as the Choroti shun the meat of the deer, so I found among the Toba men an aversion to the meat of the wild pig, although this is a very tasty food. This may possibly be due to the idea that the wild pig is a »female« animal, as is also the armadillo. At any rate the Tobas have the belief that the souls of women particularly reincarnate themselves in the wild pig. All Chaco Indians likewise have an aversion to drinking the blood or milk of animals and eating the eggs of hens and of other birds. The Indians could give me no explanation as to this superstition, and it is possible that the original reasons for it are now forgotten. It is, however, highly probable that they shun blood and milk because they believe that the spirit or soul of the animal is in them. This is at any rate quite obvious with regard to blood, which plays an important part in native superstition. Thus among all tribes there appears a mysterious dread of shedding the blood of domestic animals. The Choroti for instance, when they have to slaughter a sheep or goat, never kill the animal by cutting its throat or shedding its blood in some other way, but always, according to old observance, by strangulation. The custom is professedly observed for fear of coming in contact with the blood of the animal. — For a similar reason, I believe, the Indians have originally abstained from eating eggs. The egg is the embryo of the bird, and in the embryo or foetus of an animal, according to primitive belief, its spirit has its abode in the same way as in its blood or milk. It is interesting in this connection to note what Mr. Grubb says of the analogous ideas of the Lenguas. »Milk, whether of the cow, goat, sheep, or mare, is never drunk. The older people seem to consider it unfit for them, and children are forbidden it because it is supposed that the milk upon which they

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171 are nourished will influence them physically as well as in character, and the Indians have no desire that their children should in any way acquire the natures of such animales. [1])

262 826 774 The fear of eating the *heads* of certain animals is probably due to similar ideas. A menstruous woman, as we have seen, is forbidden to eat the head of a parrot, lest she should go mad or be changed into a tiger; and similarly a father, while he is observing the rules of the couvade, must abstain from eating the head of a cow. According to primitive belief the soul or vital power of the body is particularly concentrated in the hair and the head. That the head of a cow is especially regarded as taboo is comprehensible from the fact that animals imported by the whites are generally looked upon with superstitious fear and their flesh avoided by Indians still living in a state of nature.

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[1]) Grubb, op. cit. p. 137.

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Chapter XVII.

Magical ornaments and amulets.

In my *Civilization of the South American Indians* I have shown that most Indian ornaments have originally had a purely magical significance, although among tribes affected by European culture they have gradually lost this significance and become real »decorations». Among the Chaco Indians also this course of development is conspicuous, for instance with regard to tattooing, body-painting, and the majority of other personal ornaments. The principles of *tattooing*, as it is practised by the Choroti, Mataco, and Tobas, have been set forth by me in a previous chapter.[1]) Tattooing is first of all closely related to scarification and bleeding, customs quite commonly practised by the Indians in all parts of South America. Blood-letting is in itself regarded as a method of purifying the human organism from evil and impure spirits. The spirits are supposed to enter the system, and especially to mix in the blood, thus giving rise to ailments of different kinds and to a state of weakness in the particular part of the body to which they have attached themselves. The Indian thinks that by bleeding that part he will rid himself of the dangerous intruder, just as he sometimes thinks it will leave his body with the mere perspiration, and this belief is naturally supported by the fact that in certain cases such purgations may really give some relief. The Chaco Indians are quite familiar with this idea. Thus among the *Choroti* it is a common thing for the men to bleed themselves with a sharp bone obtained from a certain »magical» animal or a splinter of a certain wood before certain important undertakings. Thus they say that, by drawing blood from the arm, the limb will get more strength for pulling the bow; the practice is therefore especially

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[1]) See *supra*, pp. 89 sq.

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C 783 827 [324] resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arms fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the idea of the Choroti, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood; and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The same custom is practised by other tribes of the Pilcomayo. Thus C 171 Nordenskiöld noticed it among the Ashluslay, although he did not understand its real meaning. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition, he says, the Indians may be seen to pierce their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes. In both cases the idea evidently is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body and perhaps killed with the pointed instrument.

M 324 783 The scars left by the cuts are tended with care and shown with satisfaction, indeed with pride. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which the *palometa* fishes had inflicted on their body with their sharp teeth when they were bathing in the river. It is clear that according to the idea of the Indians not only the bleeding purges the body from impure matter and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous in regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with European civilization, M 751 783 304 namely, vaccination. I could myself appreciate the extraordinary importance ascribed to scars when during my stay at Esperanza I vaccinated a number of Chaco Indians who were employed as labourers at the sugar factory. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this one, and they therefore as a rule submitted to the vaccine inoculation without remonstration, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remained were regarded with wonder and admiration, and it was perfectly understood that they were a sort of warranty that the terrible disease would not attack the person wearing them.

M 302 139 Of all personal ornaments *body-painting* is the most important. All Chaco tribes practise it, and men and women alike. In the Chaco, as in other parts of South America, body-painting is essentially a custom of magical significance, as one can easily find out by considering the circumstances under which it is practised. The favourite colour of the

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Tattoocings of the Choroti and Toba Indians.

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The favourit colour of the
Indians is red or vermilion, the paint being obtained from the seeds of the plant *Bixa orellana*. But this beautiful shrub does not grow in the Gran Chaco. The Chaco tribes only obtain the paint they appreciate so much from the Indians in the north by means of intertribal commerce.

The Chaco Indians are also in the habit of blackening the face with soot or charcoal on certain occasions.

The typical way of painting the face both for men and women is either to colour the whole face and forehead red with *urucú*, or black with charcoal, or only to apply red or black spots, lines, small squares etc. to the cheeks, to the nose, round the mouth and above the eyes. The eye, which is the organ of the most important sense and the one most exposed to disorders, is generally painted with special care. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are only drawn along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled out; sometimes protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, especially by the women. Among the *Tobas*, persons of both sexes generally have the face and forehead painted red. But besides this typical facial painting the Toba women — seldom the men — are in the habit of making special patterns or ornaments upon their cheeks on certain occasions. The patterns used by the Tobas seem to be comparatively few in number; we do not find among them the same abundance of designs as for instance among the Chorotí and the Ashluslay. Custom does not require that any special kind of pattern should be applied on a particular occasion. Every woman, for instance for a religious dance or feast, paints upon her face what designs she likes and invents at the moment.

If one asks a Toba girl why she paints her face, she will in most cases simply give the answer that it is considered beautiful, sometimes she will say that it is to please and attract the men. When I asked other people about the matter I was told that the Toba girls paint themselves when they particularly desired a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive for thus decorating the face, for facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, on closer inquiry I found that the Toba women are in the habit of painting themselves *at the time of their menses*, in order to have a protective charm against the evil influences of which they especially then stand in fear. The ideas

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which induce the Indian woman to paint her face during menstruation are the same as those which have given rise to the custom of secluding her and covering her ventral parts and her head during the first menstruation and during child-birth. Next to the genitals, the uncovered face is the most critical part of the human body, and it is a universal Indian belief that evil spirits may enter the body through such natural openings as the mouth, the nostrils, the eyes, and the ears. Yet the statement that the Toba girls paint themselves to attract the men contains some truth. The Indian woman as a matter of fact is most desirous of a man during her menstrual periods. We can therefore understand how this desire has — in the case of unmarried girls — come to act as a secondary motive for facial painting.

A young Toba woman during her menstruation appeared with a couple of arrow-heads painted on each cheek with the points directed outwards as if to avert some evil influences. Another had on each cheek an ornament apparently representing the open mouth of some wild animal, showing the teeth. Both arrows and teeth of animals play an important part as magical charms in South America.

The magical significance of body-painting is also obvious in cases where it is done for purely religious dances and other kinds of conjurations. Thus most of the men and women who take part in the magical dance *Nahót dónnaron* have the face painted, generally having the whole face crudely smeared with the red dye, or blackened with charcoal, but sometimes even wearing special patterns or ornaments. The object of such facial paintings is to afford a protection against the evil spirits with whom the dancers enter into relation, and to aid in their conjuration. Similarly, when the medicine-men proceed to exercise their profession by curing sick people, they are frequently painted red or black in the face.

The Tobas moreover practise body-painting on occasions of mourning, and not merely to display their sorrow, but to frighten away the death-demon. When a man, especially an old man, dies, his widow, daughters, and other female relatives blacken their faces with charcoal. In a case which came under my notice a woman blackened her face in this way at the same moment as her father died. The spirit of the dead, which is always feared, is believed to be most dangerous to the relatives at the moment when it leaves the body. It may pass into them and cause their death, and as women are always more exposed to supernatural dangers of every kind than men, they have naturally to be more careful. But the spirit shuns the blackened face. It may be that the

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odd appearance which the charcoal gives the face acts as a deterrent; but probably some mysterious magical properties are also ascribed to the soot or charcoal itself. Black is held to be a more powerful means of inspiring evil demons with fear than other colours; hence it has especially become the scolour of sorrows; for the spirits of the recently departed, or the demons who cause disease and death, are, after all, the most dreaded of all supernatural beings.

Even ornamental painting may be applied after a death. Thus an old woman had painted a small arrow in brown colour on each cheek in the evening of the day a brother of hers had died. The true significance of this face-painting may be inferred from the fact that in the same evening all the inhabitants of the village carried arrows or sticks in their hands when they moved about outside their huts, and that the nearest relatives of the dead, who had abandoned the house of death, had made themselves a whole fence of arrows stuck in the ground, inside which they spent the night. The object of these precautions was professedly to keep off the death-demon, and the same was certainly the object of the ornamental arrows painted on the woman's cheeks. The Indians in fact believe that they can intimidate their supernatural foes in the same way as their natural enemies.

T 302 726

Lastly, the Tobas, like other South American Indians, are in the habit of painting the body before they march out to battle. This kind of body-painting has already been described in connection with Indian warfare.

C 302 881

The facial paintings of the *Choroti* show a greater variety of design than those of the Tobas. These ornamental designs are applied for feasts and dances, and since the latter in many cases have apparently a profane character, it may seem to a superficial observer as if the body-painting of the Choroti had for its object only to embellish the appearance. Such a conclusion however would be a mistake, since the Choroti dances, as we have seen, are in really in their nature a sort of magical conjuration. Similarly, the feasts held in the honour of young girls at puberty have a purely religious significance. At a feast of this kind where I was present most of the men who took part in the ceremonies had painted on their faces ornamental designs in red and black colours. Many of them had painted on each cheek an X-shaped design which is frequently met with in the ornamental art of the South American Indians and which is evidently nothing but an impressionistic drawing of the human body, representing for instance the breast and the stomach, of

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 382 881 the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

M 382 789 Among the *Mataco*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruháh*, whereas M [765] the red painting of the men is called *oróitláh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and M [751] all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

M 301 789 Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an M incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have [756] given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets,[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich. *Los comarcas vírgenes*, p. 231.

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The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti. Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsel*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious. C 301 789

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Nocténes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not »ornaments« in the civilized sense of the word. C 301 751 M 751 301 C M 291 301 302

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures M 301 789 755

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301 and they are not even meant to be decorations. Among the Choroti it
789 was no rare thing to see old men and women — especially when they
were suffering from some pulmonary catarrh or cough, or from rheuma-
755 tism — wearing a cord or strap bound tightly round the chest. The idea appeared to be that the demon who had entered into the chest and caused the evil should be forced to leave the body or at least prevented from penetrating further. On one occasion I met an old woman whose right forearm had been paralyzed, probably through a fit of apoplexy. She had a dirty woollen band tied round the arm at the wrist, and when I wanted to remove the useless thing, she would not allow it, declaring that it was »good». I soon learnt that the arm had been seized by an evil *mōhsek*, and realised that the band was »good» as a sort of charm against the demon. Just as civilized people may, in a case of snake-bite, apply a ligature or cord round the bitten limb above the wound so as to prevent the poison from spreading, so the Indians consider such ligatures as preventive of evil spirits. Among the Choroti the band is not put on with any ceremonies, but probably the material itself is supposed to have some mysterious power. However this may be, in these cords or bands tied round the breast or the arms, we have, I think, the most simple specimens of bracelets, girdles, and other magical ornaments of the same type used by the Indians.

In addition to the magical ornaments here touched upon the Chaco Indians use various kinds of amulets and charms consisting of the tusks or claws of the jaguar or other wild animals, in feathers of birds, mussel shells etc., but I shall not dwell upon this side of the practical religion of the Indians. What I have still to pay particular attention to are their funeral rites and ceremonies.

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Chapter XVIII.

Ideas of future life and funeral ceremonies.

Although the Chaco Indians certainly do not believe in the »immortality of the soul» — an expression often abused, especially by Christian missionaries — they all believe in the continued existence of the soul after death. Their ideas about the future life are much the same as those found among most primitive peoples. Man is, as it were, a double being; in the visible body there resides an ethereal shadow-like being, mostly invisible, which is its life-essence and the particular seat of which is the chest. That the soul is thought of as being in its nature a shadow-like form appears especially from the name given it by the Tobas: *kndepakál*, which means »our (*i. e.* the human) shadow». The Choroti usually speak of »the dead one» (*yál*) whereas the Mataco call the soul *kusitsá*, a word the etymology of which is obscure. When man is asleep this ethereal being is believed to have left its abode for the moment, and what he experiences in his dreams is believed to be really experienced by the soul during its wanderings. When he awakes it returns to the body. In death, on the other hand, the soul has left its abode for ever. This is the work of the evil demon who entered into the body causing disease and death.

Leaving its bodily frame at the moment of death, the soul is set free to an active and independent existence and changed into a supernatural being of whom the Indians as a rule stand in great fear. According to the ideas they have of the existence and activity of the soul after its separation from the body, the mysterious spirit at first hovers about its old abode, the dead body, and the house where the departed lived, being then particularly dangerous to the surviving relatives. The danger is greatest before the corpse has been buried. The Indians also fancy that the soul follows the body to the grave, and their burial

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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M 115 customs in fact seem particularly to aim at interring the soul with the body. Later on, it is thought, the soul leaves for the forests and the plains, or rises towards the sky, becoming one of those innumerable demons who people the spiritual world of the Indians.

T 115 172 This belief prevails among all Chaco tribes. None of the more primitive Indians, neither the Choroti, nor the Mataco nor the Ashlualay, have developed ideas about a hades, a realm of the dead, where the souls of the departed are assembled. Such a belief is only encountered among the Tobas, the most advanced of the Pilcomayo tribes, who nevertheless at the same time keep to the primitive notion about a soul following the dead body to the grave. When a man dies, the Tobas told me, his »good spirit» (*peyák nôtta*) takes his soul (*kadepakól*) to the Paradise of the Indians. This Paradise is in the heavens and is called *Piyím* (*píyim* = heaven). It is situated in the east where the sun rises. The *Piyím* does not, however, altogether coincide with the sky. It is farther off, *above* the sky, for »upon the visible heaven the sun dies at night, but in the happy resting-place of the dead Tobas the sun never dies». Night and darkness do not exist there, day and sunshine continually reign. In the *píyim* there are great villages and nice houses, fish and other eatables abound, the men are constantly drinking algarobabeer and maizebeer. Disease and death and other evils which embitter the earthly life do not exist there. The men also marry and beget children there, for both men and women are taken to *Piyím* after death. — In short, in the ideas which the Tobas entertain of a Paradise or realm of the dead we find a simple idealisation of earthly conditions. As the Tobas themselves expressed their view on this point: since the earthly life is connected with so many evils we imagine that the future life must be so much better and happier.

I may add that ideas of the Tobas about a Paradise and the future destiny of the soul have nothing to do with moral considerations. Every Toba is taken to *Piyím* after death, independently of the good or bad character he showed during life. Likewise, his social position makes no difference in his destiny after death.

T 171 177 Whereas the Tobas are the only tribe on the Pilcomayo which has developed a theory about a special resting-place for the dead, the half-civilized Avas in the north have similar ideas of the destiny of the soul after death. The Paradise of the Avas is called Ibuoca: it is a sort of »happy fields» where the departed souls go and where they lead a joyous life, feasting and drinking maize beer. Since the Bolivian Tobas have

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Toba SI12

intercourse with the Avas, it is possible that in their ideas of the future abode of the soul they have been influenced by their neighbours in the north. Such an influence, however, need not necessarily be assumed since ideas of this kind are held by many uncivilized peoples in South America and in other parts of the world and may be regarded as the natural outcome of religious evolution.

In any case it seems clear that the idea of *Piyim*, where the departed soul is immediately taken, and whence it does not return, is inconsistent with the precautions which the Tobas take to inter the soul together with the body, to drive it away from the village, etc. This contradiction may be partly due to the fact that the latter, more primitive, idea has not yet lost its hold upon the mind of the Tobas, nor been wholly supplanted by the younger notion of the heavenly resting-place. But with regard to the funeral and mourning customs it is necessary to make a distinction between *the soul of the dead person* and *the evil demon who caused death* by entering into the body. Many of the rites and ceremonies which are performed at the funeral and afterwards are in fact directed more against the latter than against the former. When, for instance, an epidemic rages in a village it is believed that it is visited by an evil demon who wanders about attacking and killing people. The demon is not content with taking one man's life, but is believed to look for more victims, and the nearest relatives of the dead are then especially in danger. However, in practice the difference between such disease and death demons and the spirit of the dead is not always clearly maintained. The Tobas also believe that the disease demon, having once got possession of the patient and caused his death, will thereafter remain in his body and, moreover, seize his spirit or soul as well, with the result that he is himself altogether changed into an evil demon independently of what has been his character in life. This propensity of the death demon, to identify himself with the deceased, makes the Indian ideas about the spirits of the departed more complicated, and also explains why persons who in their life-time have perhaps been loved and esteemed, are after death feared as malignant and dangerous beings. This change has taken place owing to the operation of the strange demon who invaded the deceased. The greater magical power a person has had in life, the more dangerous will he become after death, for the evil demon in possession lays hold of this power. This is the true reason why old people, and especially sorcerers, are so greatly feared after death.

Savages are not able to work out and systematise their ideas in the

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000 same clear logical way as civilised people, and their theories in religious matters are not, therefore, free from contradictions. This is especially the case when ideas belonging to an older and a newer stratum of religious thought are mingled. What the ethnologist has to do in such cases is to state what beliefs are actually held; but he ought not to try to reconcile the inconsistencies.

763 The funeral customs of the Chaco Indians appear from the following description of a burial which I witnessed in a Toba village; the dead person was an old man: —

As soon as it became clear that the patient could not recover and that death was imminent, the female relatives of the sick man began loudly to wail and shout. At the same moment as he breathed his last, his wife and daughter blackened their faces with charcoal, washing it away soon afterwards. The man died in the afternoon shortly before the
764 approach of darkness. There was not, therefore, time to bury him the same day, as the Tobas usually do. All relatives of the deceased, who had lived in the same house as he, at once retired from it and left the dead man alone there close to a big fire previously made. The door of
[513] the house was then carefully shut and barricaded with various blocks and poles; even a *catre* (a sort of bedstead made of laths) was turned over it. Outside the door thus closed another big fire was made. At some distance from this the relatives of the dead man encamped for the night on the ground beside a third fire which was kept up during the whole night. The spot where they stayed was moreover fenced round with a great number of arrows stuck in the ground. Nearly all the inhabitants in the village, even the women, were seen to bear arrows or large sticks in their hands when they moved about outside their houses this evening. An old sister of the deceased appeared with an arrow painted in brown colour on each cheek. When darkness set in, a peculiar purification ceremony with fire took place. Some of the men now and then seized a brand from the fire which was made outside the house of death, and, incessantly swaying it round in all directions, they went through the village far into the forest, from time to time uttering loud shouts. After a while they again returned to the house from which they had started. This procedure was repeated several times, the men always starting from the fire outside the house of the dead man, and carrying the brands in different directions into the forest. This purification ceremony is called *koyadānatti*.

The following morning, at dawn, the dead Indian was carried to the

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forest close to the river to be buried, followed by the wailing women. He was laid in the grave naked and in a half-sitting posture with the head bent down between the knees. The grave was carefully filled up, and a small mound was made upon which a great number of branches of trees, provided with big thorns, were afterwards placed. 164

As soon as the burial was finished the relatives made two big fires close to the grave, where the clothes in which they had carried the corpse 168

A Toba grave: the tomb is formed by a number of thorny tree branches, and behind it a big fire is burning.

were burned as well as various others of his belongings: his *poncho* or mantle, his trousers and waist-belt, his hat, his nets, his bow and arrows, the goat's skin which every Toba Indian possesses, etc. During all these operations the loud and exaggerated wailing of the women was heard from time to time.

The burning of the property of the deceased was continued later outside the house in which he had died. Everything which had belonged to him or been in some contact with him was left to be consumed by the flames. His clay vessels were broken, even the bedstead where he had lain was destroyed. Every time the women were obliged to enter the house to fetch something, they gave vent to loud wailing. Finally the

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768 house itself was pulled down and partly burnt. At some distance from it the relatives started to build themselves a new dwelling, but the fear of the ghost overcame them, and after some days they left the village entirely and went off to another place to settle among their relatives there.

764 The burial-party, having returned to the village after the interment, sat down to drink beer brewed of maize. Both men and women took part in the drinking-bout, the women as usual drinking separately from the men.

The wife and daughter of the deceased the same day cut off the hair of their heads and burnt it.

776 It is evident that most of the ceremonies described were inspired by
761 fear of the death-spirit. The spirit is not only supposed still to reside
789 in the dead body which is therefore shunned, but also to move about in the village looking for other victims. He is particularly attached to all things with which the departed has been in contact. The Indians fancy that they can expel or intimidate the invisible persecutor by the same material means to which they would have recourse against a human enemy. Thus in the case described, they tried to shut the spirit in the house where the corpse lay by barricading the door with poles, to inspire him with fear by means of arrows and sticks, and so forth. When I asked the relatives why they fenced round the place where they spent the night with arrows, they gave the characteristic answer that they were »good»; this meant that they were an effective protection against the malicious demon. The Indians generally use the same expression of amulets, as well as of religious ceremonies and conjurations, when one asks them why they are performed — Arrows play an important part as charms or amulets among the South American Indians.

789 Another effective means of expelling evil spirits is *fire*, and the many
783 fires which the Indians made during the critical night were typical of the Indian view on this point. The fires which are frequently kept
372 burning in the Indian villages at night have for their object not only to keep off wild animals and mosquitos but also evil spirits. The particular ceremony with the fire brands which were carried about in the village in the evening (*koyadāwatti*) had a similar magical object, namely, to purify the village and drive the death-demon away into the forest. Such purification ceremonies with fire after a death are customary among most Chaco tribes.

764 The thorny branches which were laid upon the grave were intended
775 partly to secure the dead body against wild animals, partly to prevent

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T 764 775

the death-spirit from rising from the grave. The Tobas believe that if shortly after the burial the body is exhumed, the spirit will come out and may transform himself into a tiger which will kill the people. But the latter may sometimes happen even without any particular profanation of the burial-place.

M C 764

The customs here described with particular reference to the Tobas are typical of the burial customs of the Pilcomayo tribes in general. Thus the Choroti and the Mataco as a rule bury the corpse in a seated or reclining posture as do the Tobas. There are however exceptions to this rule, and at least in one case which came under my notice the dead Choroti man had been buried in a lying posture. At each end of the grave had been placed a clay pot, partly filled with water. The idea underlying this arrangement was not quite clear. Since among the Indians supernatural power is frequently ascribed to clay pots, it is probable that they had been placed on the tomb for some superstitious reasons, perhaps with a view to keeping off the death-demon. I may add that among the Chaco Indians offerings of food and drink, or other kinds of offering, are not generally made to the spirits of the departed. Certain traces of food and drink offerings have been found among the Mataco, but on the whole we may say that the cult of the dead, which plays such an important part in the religion of most South American Indians, is unknown to the natives of the Gran Chaco. When I asked the Choroti whether they would not offer food and drink to the spirit of an Indian who had recently been buried, they laughed and answered: »He is dead, he wants no food«. Still of course neither the Choroti nor other Chaco Indians have wholly divested their minds of the primitive idea that in the after-life the soul has to a certain extent the same wants and appetites as in this earthly life.

M C [775]

As a rule the place where a person has been buried is not, among the Choroti and the Mataco, marked by any tomb or heap of earth thrown up over the grave. Some tribes, however, at any rate the Choroti, are in the habit of constructing, over the place, a primitive kind of hut, consisting of a roof of twigs and grass resting upon four poles. The hut is said to be »the habitation of the *móheke*«. Chiefs and old family fathers are particularly honoured in this way after death.

The customs practised immediately after a death are in their main features the same in all Chaco tribes. The Choroti, as soon as the sick Indian has drawn his last breath, start to make a tremendous noise with all sorts of rattles and by shouting and wailing. The medicine-men

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Choroti SK6

M C 764 M [535]

chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a »sign of sorrow», but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *uáhsah* (= *eis sáhe*), *i. e.* »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M 764 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algaroba beer is most appreciated, but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly, the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

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relatives of the departed cannot live safely in it. This is the reason why in the Gran Chaco a traveller so often encounters remains of Indian villages which have evidently been burnt and abandoned by their inhabitants. The radical destruction of the whole village is always resorted to when several deaths have taken place at short intervals. The relatives of the deceased, when they abandon their own village, generally go and live with their relatives and friends in a neighbouring village, where they stay for some time, or until they decide to found a new settlement in some other part of the country. Custom requires that when the mourners arrive at the other village, they shall be received with wailing. M C 783 768

The Tobas, although they always burn the house where a death has taken place, do not as a rule deem it necessary to destroy the whole village. Similarly the relatives of the deceased generally remain there, building themselves a new dwelling; in other cases they leave the place for some time. The other inhabitants of the village, on the other hand, make no notable change in their mode of life, since they are not to the same extent exposed to danger from the death-spirit as the nearest relations. T 768

Weeping and wailing plays an important part among the mourning ceremonies of the Indians, although it is always limited to the women and the children. The fact that wailing is ceremonial clearly appears from the circumstances under which it takes place. Although it is beyond doubt that the Indians are capable of real feelings of sorrow at the death of a near relation, yet their intense fear of death — including the fear of the dead body — is apparent throughout their mourning customs. The objects of the wailing seems to be partly to propitiate the spirit of the departed relative by showing him how deeply the survivors grieve at his death, partly to frighten away the death-demon by the noise. The latter point of view is probably the most important. Wailing is continued for several months after the death. The length of the wailing period varies according to the social importance of the deceased. A great chief is mourned in all tribes for longer than an ordinary member of the community, in some cases up to a whole year. As to the manner of wailing there is a marked distinction between the Tobas and the Mataco on the one hand, and the Choroti on the other. The wailing of the Toba women is like a greatly exaggerated loud crying and sobbing which is seemingly the expression of a desperate sorrow. The wailing of the Choroti women is calmer and more like the weeping of a child. Every lamentation consists of a series of sounds produced in a high falsetto voice and M C T 765 152 C 765

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C 765 forming a falling scale in a minor key, which makes a very peculiar impression. At the time of mourning the women and children commence this wailing at fairly regular intervals and all at once, as if it were agreed upon. To one who lives for some time in a Choroti village it is evident C 765 that wailing forms part of Indian etiquette. Not only must the mourners, when they arrive from another village, which has been abandoned on 576 account of a death, be received by a choir of weeping women and children; any guest who arrives in a village shortly after a death has taken place there is received in the same way. When in March 1912 I visited the Choroti in the interior of their land, where no European had yet penetrated, I noticed with astonishment that on my arrival at a village I was received with loud wailing by the women and children. I soon learnt that a great chief had died some time ago; but the fact that the wailing was renewed to receive me remained unexplained. I was told, however, that this peculiar way of receiving strangers was prescribed by Choroti custom. The most probable explanation seems to me that it is feared lest the spirit of the defunct should revisit his people in a strange disguise, and that the wailing has for its object to propitiate him or to frighten him away. Such ideas prevail among other South American tribes also, both in the Chaco and elsewhere.

M C T 765 302 562 There are certain other customs observed in connection with mourning, but they are as a rule limited to the women. Among all Pilcomayo tribes it is customary that when a man dies, his widow, daughters, and sisters cut their hair short with the sharp teeth of the *pelomata* fish and burn it. Ceremonial wailing always attends the cutting of the hair. When I asked the Choroti why a widow cuts and destroys her hair after the death of her husband, I was told that the dead husband, who wants his wife to follow him to the grave, is believed to attack her through the hair. In order to rid herself of this danger she shaves it off. Exactly T 765 the same belief prevails among the Tobas: the dead husband or father will seize his surviving wife or daughter by the hair and cause her to fall ill and die. Among the Tobas a widow cuts her hair twice, first immediately after the husband's death, the second time some months later T [602] when the hair has again grown long. At the same time she repeats the wailing. Similarly the nearest female relatives have to diet, in so far as they are not allowed to eat fish for many months. If they infringe the rules of diet in regard to fish they may sicken and die. After a Toba woman has cut her hair the second time she may again eat fish, her mourning is over and she is allowed to marry again. Even some of the

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men abstain from eating fish for some time after the death of a near relation. T 765

Apart from the custom of cutting the hair neither the Tobas nor other Pilcomayo tribes nowadays practise ceremonial mutilations of any kind. Formerly however, as the Tobas told me, they practised the following mourning custom. When a woman died, her eldest son had to cut off one of his finger nails. The nail was fastened to a string and hung round the neck of a dog, which was thereafter driven away. If the son omitted to do this, it was believed that the soul of the woman would enter into the nail and kill him in the shape of a tiger into which it would transform itself. This could be prevented by sending away the nail. The dog carrying it away would meet some other tribesman into which the soul would enter and thus become harmless, for the spirits of the dead are harmful only to the nearest relatives. The Indian who told me this added that the custom is no longer practised by the Tobas, because nowadays it very seldom happens that people are killed by tigers and thus the belief that women are changed into such beasts after death has lost its foundation. This again, according to the Indian belief, is owing to the fact that the medicine-men are now able to provide against such sad eventualities by their incantations and conjurations. T 765 T 775

As to the explanation of these observances, we have already seen that the abstention from eating fish is due to the idea that the death-demon may possibly hide in the fish and gain entrance into the body. Of special interest are the mourning customs relating to hair and nails. Hair-cutting as a mourning practice of women is met with among most South American Indians and — like other kinds of mutilation — are essentially purification ceremonies of purely magical significance. In the hair and the nails according to primitive belief the vital power of the human body is concentrated. One who possesses these essential parts of a person's body is believed to possess his soul, through which he will be able to exert magical influence upon him. If this is so, it is conceivable that invisible supernatural enemies would take particular interest in these parts. Consequently, when a woman is in a delicate situation, she takes the precaution to remove and destroy these critical parts of her body. According to Indian belief, women are always more exposed to supernatural dangers than men, and therefore have to be more careful in every respect. M 765 826

The fear of the dead is also manifested in that their *names* are forbidden to be mentioned. This is another general superstition among the M 765 551

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765 551 Chaco tribes. These savages as a rule are very reluctant to mention their true Indian names. Thus, as I have mentioned before, when the Chaco Indians visit the whites they nearly always assume names for use instead of their real names. If the Indians are thus careful with the names of the living, those of the dead are particularly regarded as taboo and must never be mentioned, especially by the nearest relatives. When I asked one of my Indian friends about the name of a man who had just died, he hesitated for a moment, looked round, and when he saw that no one of the relatives was near, he *whispered* the name in my ear. This superstition, I believe, is ultimately based on the idea, held by all Indians, that *the soul of a person is inherent in his name*. To know a person's name is therefore the same as to have his soul in one's power, and supernatural influences can be exerted upon him through this invisible part of his personality, just as they can be exerted through a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail. If the soul is believed to be in the name, we can easily understand why the names of the dead are especially taboo. To mention it is the same as to enter into close contact with the departed soul itself, to which the infection of death is attached, and this is supposed to entail unfortunate consequences, at least for the nearest relatives. For an outsider there is evidently not the same personal danger. But since a person may be controlled and conjured through his name, it is further believed that the rest of the dead in the grave may be disturbed by mentioning his name. It is therefore considered a dreadful indiscretion against the relatives to speak of the deceased by name. This is the idea prevailing both among the Tobas and among other Chaco tribes. Generally the Indians do not like to speak about the dead at all, and if they do, their tacit maxim is: *de mortuis nil nisi bene*. The relatives would never admit that they fear a dead parent and regard him as malicious. They always pronounce him to be »good», as if believing that by such a euphemism they may change his character or paralyse the harmful effects arising from him.

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Chapter XIX.

Ceremonial games.

During my stay among the Choroti my attention was drawn to a curious game which was played in all villages in the month of March and evidently had some mystic meaning. The game later on turned out to be «international» in the Chaco, most tribes knowing it and playing it in somewhat different forms. The Choroti call it *syuke*, the Tobas *soka*, the Ashluslay *syúkak*, etc., names which are evidently nothing but different corruptions of the Quichua word *chunca*, ten. Similarly the playing terms in the Chaco are as it were international and of Quichua origin, a fact which seems to support the assumption that at any rate the principal ideas underlying the game have been borrowed from the Quichua Indians.

I have only studied this game among the *Choroti* and the description I shall give of it in the following pages refers merely to the variety of the game existing among these Indians.[1])

The dice consist of four pieces of wood, which are on one side convex, on the other side quite flat. The convex side is often ornamented with certain incised figures. (See fig. 10, a.)

The player takes two dice in each hand, throws them up smoothly against each other and allows them to fall on the ground. The position taken by the dice on the ground determines the value of the cast. The points are reckoned in the following way:

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[1]) Nordenskiöld described this game in 1910 in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, but its magical or religious significance — which, of course gives it its particular interest — has entirely escaped him. This may in part be due to the fact that Nordenskiöld never saw the game played at the proper season, the beginning of the «winter», but arranged playing-parties at an other season to learn how it was played. On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that many ceremonies, which are in their character magical or religious, have been misunderstood by ethnologists and regarded as purely profane entertainments.

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4	convex	sides	upwards	counts	4.	This	is	called	*tsuna.*
3	»	»	»	»	0.	»	»	»	*laképa*, nothing.
2	»	»	»	»	1.	»	»	»	*akale.*
1	»	»	»	»	0.	»	»	»	*laképa.*
0	»	»	»	»	2.	»	»	»	*kima*

The counting-board is drawn on the ground and consists of a crescent-shaped row of shallow holes or grooves, 23 in number (Fig. 10, *b*). The

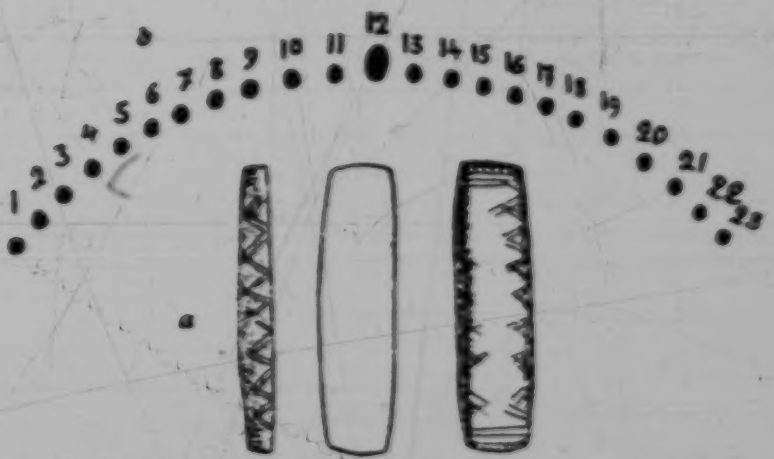

Fig. 10. The Counting-board for *akále* game and the wooden dice.

numbers 1 and 23 signify the starting-points or »houses» of the players. In each of these grooves every player at the beginning of the game sticks an arrow which serves as a marker. In 2—11 and 13—22 small pegs or cobs of maize are placed, which are called the »sheep» of the players. The groove numbered 12 is empty and somewhat larger than the rest. This is called the »lake» or »river» (*lewk*) and arriving there a player is said to be »drowned».

The players may be two, four, six, or eight. If we take the simplest case, when the players are only two, A and B, the game is played in the following way:

A begins and throws, for instance, 2 (*kima*). Then he puts his arrow into the second groove reckoning from his »house», that is to say into

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number 3. He repeats his throw and throws for instance, 1 (*shuke*). Then he puts his arrow into number 4, and so forth. A continues until he throws 0, whereupon B begins and continues until he throws 0. B thenstarts from his shouse number 23, proceeding backwards. If a player passes the sriver (12) and enters a hole occupied by his opponent, he is entitled to throw out his opponent's sheeps. The object of the game is at first to throw out all the sheeps of the opponent, the player passing from one end of the series of grooves to the other and back again. If a player succeeds in placing his marker (arrow) in a groove where his opponent happens to have his own marker, the latter is skilled (thrown out) and has to start again from the beginning. Every player tries to throw out all the sheeps of his opponent and at last his marker also. If he succeeds in doing so he has won. If someone during the game arrives at the sriver (*tsuk*), he is sdrowned, and if by the following throw he does not succeed in getting out, (that is, if he throws 0), he is obliged to go back to that groove situated nearest to his shouse where he has still a sheeps. 524

Gambling is always connected with the *shuke* game, and the stakes lost — whether it be a collar, a shirt, a pair of trousers or some other valuable object — are always scrupulously paid as real debts of honour. This is no doubt in part due to the fact, that the *shuke* game is not a hazard game in the ordinary sense of the word, but has a ceremonial significance. If the debts were not scrupulously paid, the game would fail to produce the effect which the Indians expect of it, namely, the increase of the edible fruits of the forest. 525 789

What struck me particularly with regard to the *shuke* game was the fact that, at any rate among the Choroti Indians, it is only played at a certain time of the year, more strictly speaking, in the month of March, when the rainy season on the Chaco ends and the dry season or swinter begins. Then everyone began upon it at once. In all villages *shuke*-dice were carved and the game went on every day for many hours, sometimes from early morning till late in the evening. This very fact seemed to me to indicate that certain mysterious ideas were connected with the game. Besides, the game was played in a strikingly intensive, almost nervous tempo and the results of every cast — *towu*, shuke, *kima* — were always shouted out in a very loud voice, which could be heard far away. 524 789

The Chorotis expressly declared to me that the *shuke* game is played only at the beginning of the swinter, when the algarroba (*Prosopis alba*) and other edible fruits of the forest grow scarce. At that time a period begins for the Chaco Indians when they usually have to struggle very

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hard for existence. Now the game is supposed to have the effect of *increasing the fruit and making the Indians rich*. This is made possible by virtue of the fact that *among the Indians there is always someone* who wins, from whose luck all will benefit. The Indians believe that just as they can influence the course of nature, hurry on the growth of the crops, by beating drums, dancing, and shaking rattles, so they believe that at this critical period they can enhance the vegetative power of the useful trees and prevent starving by playing *skuke*. It seems to me probable that in this game the magical effects are produced merely by the procedure of playing — by the feverish pace at which the game goes on, and so forth — just as technique and the very rhythm play an essential part in such magical ceremonies as dancing and the beating of drums.

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That the *skuke* game, so far as its principal features are concerned, has been borrowed by the Choroti from the mountain Indians, as has been suggested even by Nordenskiöld, is a matter beyond doubt and may be inferred from the playing terms themselves which are of Quichua origin (*skuke* = *chunca*, *tunca*, and probably *lima*). On the other hand, it is certain that the Incas never had an exactly similar game, and Nordenskiöld's imagination carries him too far when he tries to show that certain objects, found in archeological excavations on the mountain area of Ecuador, are nothing but counting-boards which have been used for a game more or less identical with the *skuke*. [1]) Nordenskiöld's curious idea of connecting the said mysterious objects with the *skuke* game of the Chaco Indians entirely loses its importance in the face of the fact that, as I have shown elsewhere [2]), the ancient Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians had several games of chance, none of which bore the slightest resemblance to the Chaco game just mentioned. The map published by the same ethnographer, showing the supposed distribution of games of chance in South America, was therefore decidedly prematurely drawn. [3]) The particular character of the Chaco game has obviously, in

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[1]) See his article «Spielsteine aus Peru und Ecuador», in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Heft 2 u. 3. 1918, p. 162.

[2]) See my *Ceremonial Games of the South American Indians* (*Societas Scientiarum Fennica. Commentationes humanarum litterarum*. Helsingfors, 1930).

[3]) Whereas Nordenskiöld erroneously assigns the neighbourhood of Quito in Ecuador as a region where a game like the *skuke* has been practised, he knows nothing of the games of chance I have myself discovered later in that country: the *kasiru* game practised in the southern and eastern mountain regions, the *kasiritu* and *singo* in vogue among the forest Indians on the rivers Bobonaza and Pastaza.

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many details, been determined by local conditions, and therefore must differ from the games customary among the ancient mountain Indians. Thus all ceremonial dice games in the Inca empire seem to have been connected with the *cult of the dead*, an idea which is wholly foreign to the Chaco Indians. Further, the Incas probably knew only of *portable* playing-boards, whereas the Chaco Indians always draw the counting-board on the ground. Moreover, the latter Indians use arrows as markers, the place where the player is »drowned«, is called »river«, and so forth.

The Chaco Indians, in all probability, have only borrowed the leading ideas underlying the game, together with the terminology, from their neighbours in the west, and to a certain extent invented a new game, giving these borrowings an application of their own. When the primitive Indians from the interior of the country came in contact with the comparatively civilized peoples in the west, they learned to know certain games which were said to have the marvellous effect of making the fields fruitful and filling the granaries of the Indians. We may assume that it was precisely this *practical* importance of the game that impressed the mind of the primitive Indians and induced them to invent a game similar to that customary among the Incas and to ascribe to it a similar magical efficacy. But the *shuka* was not the only game which originated in this way under the influence of the Inca civilization. Various other games, both games of chance and games of skill, seem to be in vogue in the Chaco, even among tribes so distant as the Lenguas of Paraguay, but of their possible ceremonial character nothing is known. If we may trust the ethnologists who have hitherto related the customs of the Chaco tribes, the *shuka* game is the only one to which a magical significance is ascribed.

Nor does he know the *tuka* game practised by the Quichua Indians all over the Bolivian mountain area. The value of culture parallels so arbitrarily drawn seems to me most doubtful.

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MAP
of the
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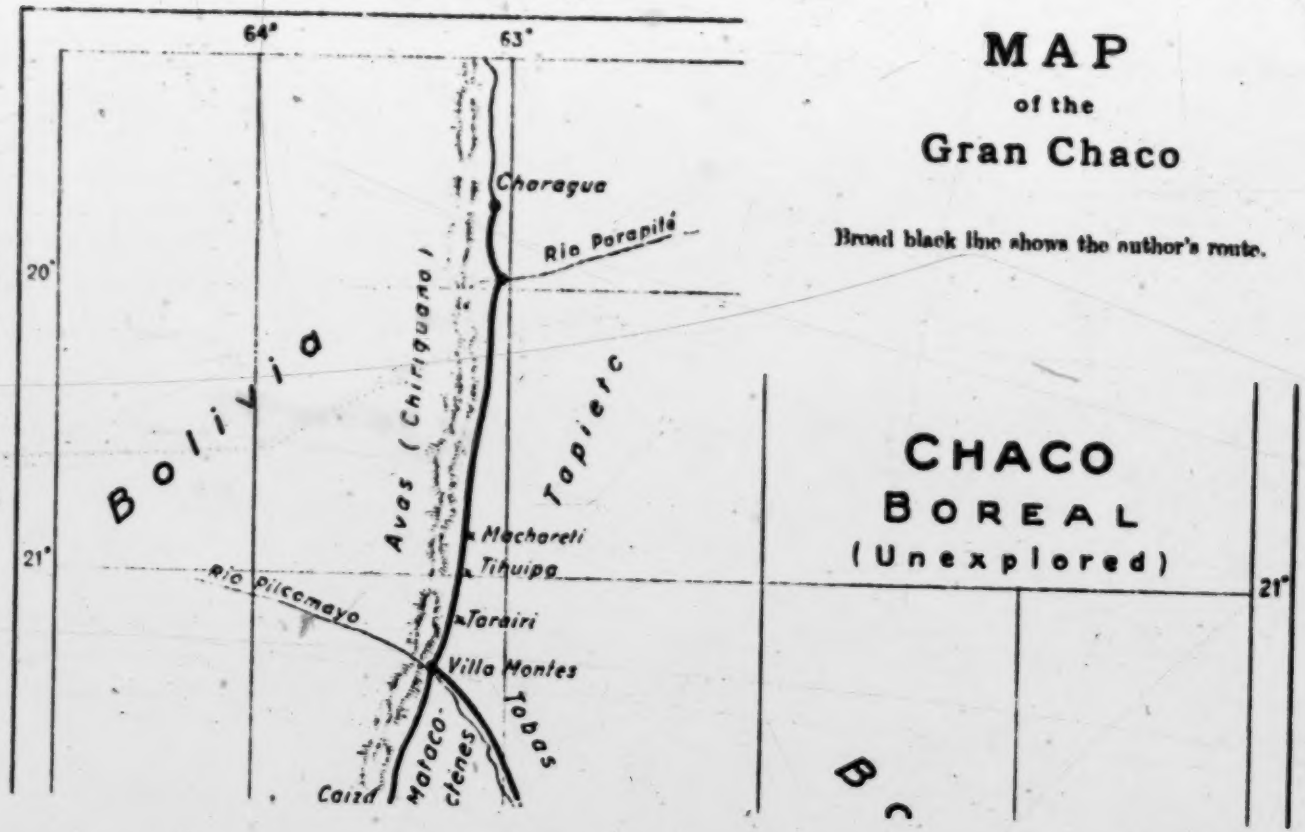
Broad black line shows the author's route.



[End Map (A)]

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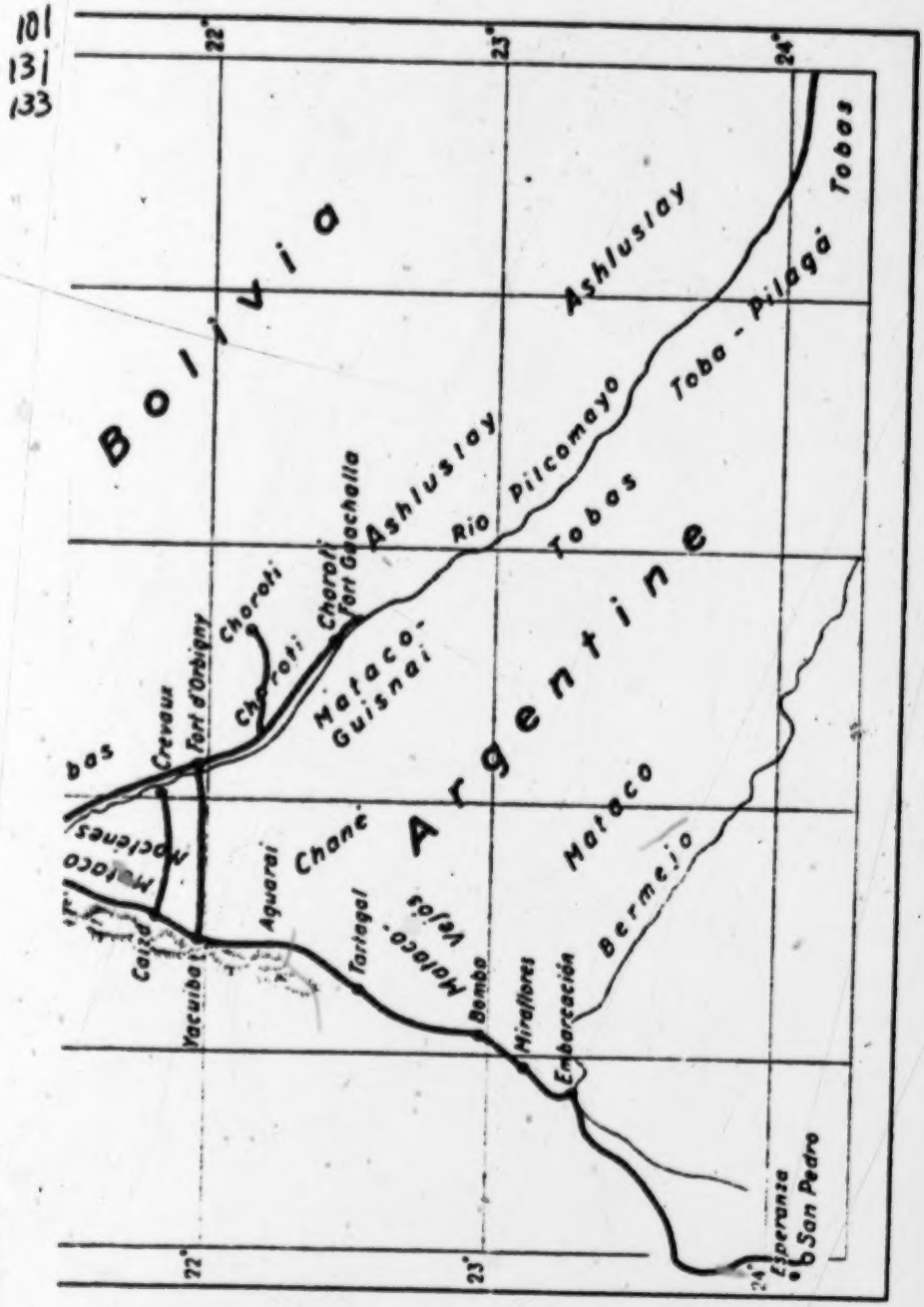

[End Map (B)]

[For general cultural information on the Toba Indians, see also 2: Karsten, SI7 Mataco, category 116.]

[For general cultural information on the Choroti Indians see also 2: Karsten, SI7 Mataco, category 116.]

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Myths and Tales of the Matako Indians

(The Gran Chaco, Argentina)

by

Dr. Alfred Métraux
Ethnologist on the staff of Bernice P. Bishop Museum (Honolulu, Hawaii)

PREFACE

114 I recorded the myths and tales presented here during an expedition in the Argentinian Chaco in 1933. I went there with the purpose of studying the Toba-Pilagá Indians living on the Pilcomayo, especially those around the marshy region known as Esteros Patiños. My numerous trips to the Chaco often brought me into contact with Matako Indians, who are widely spread in the Argentinian Chaco along the Bermejo and the upper stream of the Pilcomayo. At that time I had no intention of studying the Matako as I expected my investigations among the Toba to absorb all of my time. But many times, owing to the bad communications existing in the Chaco, or more frequently to the indolence of the white settlers, I was delayed at some place near a Matako encampment. To kill time I made some observations of the Matako. I made a special effort to obtain from them tales and myths because very little is known of the folklore of these Indians. The short and casual interviews with these Indians were rather productive and in relatively few days I obtained a variety of myths, tales, and legends. During the recording of this material I had frequent opportunities to ask questions about matters touched upon in the tales. The discussions sometimes provoked fresh questions and led to subjects that

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I had not planned to investigate. I hoped that the notes I took then would be useful for a more systematic and complete study of the Matako in the future. I should never have thought of publishing these tales and documents had I not good reason to believe that there is little chance for me to return to the Chaco.[1] Even if destiny should take me again to that country, I do not know whether the same material would be available. The disappearance of the old native cultures in South America is rapid, especially among tribes of a low cultural level.

The Matako, more than any other Chaco tribe, have been exposed to the degrading influence of white colonists, but there still remain some villages, especially on the upper Pilcomayo and on the middle course of the Bermejo, where the natives live according to ancient standards. Those who had their villages along the »linea», the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación, were the most miserable wretches that I saw in South America. Generous English missionaries try with very precarious means to rescue the Indians by extending to them the protection of the Mission stations and by helping during the critical period of transition from their native culture toward a new form of life. The mission work among the Matako has proved most successful. The Indians have shown extraordinary aptitude and under the direction of the English missionaries they display remarkable talents in crafts that they ignored completely a few years ago. Their zest for instruction has always been deep and their enthusiasm must sometimes be moderated. The rapidity and ease with which the Matako adapt themselves to our modern civilization remains one of the most puzzling problems that I met with in South America. Seen in their native environment the Matako seem to be the most irreducible tribe of the Chaco. Even their physical aspect carries an impression of

[1] I was unable to check many of the ethnological data given in the notes. To make them scientifically available I have reproduced the information in the very terms of the Indians.

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primitiveness more accentuated than that of other tribes. 181
They are among the dirtiest peoples of South America, and [516]
in the sense of cleanliness they are inferior to the Toba.

Matako material culture does not differ markedly from 171
that of any of the other Chaco tribes. Their weapons are the 105
same, their houses of the common beehive type, and their craftsmanship is hardly distinguishable from that of their neighbors. Judged outwardly, the Matako might be confused with the mass of Chaco cultures. A keen observer notices a slight superiority in the agriculture of the Matako, as compared with the Toba. The distinctive character of Matako culture may only be appreciated in contrast with that of the Toba-Pilagá. While the Matako are generally peaceful the Toba are warlike and have almost always been the conquerors in the far distant regions. However, it cannot be said that the Matako have not also fought bravely against their enemies or that they are lacking in military tradition. Still the contrast between them is striking even to an observer like myself who has spent only a short time among these Indians. The difference between these apparently identical cultures lies primarily in the stressing of religion and magic among the Matako in contrast with the relative unimportance of like interests among the Toba. Although built on the same pattern as that of the Toba, the culture of the Matako is interwoven with ceremonial activities, ritual dances, and expulsion of spirits. It is almost impossible to stay with a group of Matako more than one day without having the opportunity to attend some ceremony. The traditional blowing of medicine-men upon the sick occurs among the Matako as among other Chaco tribes. It is always associated with dances together with spells of magic and has rarely the individual character of the same ceremony among the Toba. Not only are the peformances of Matako medicine-men more impressive than those of other tribes in the same area, the external appearance of the medicine-man and his assistants denotes the great importance given to ritual details and

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171 accessories. The performers wear red wool frontlets trimmed
105 with feathers on their heads, on their waists are feather belts, and rattles are tied on their feet. The magical power is attributed to every ornament, a belief less apparent among other Indians. So far as I know the Matako are the only Chaco tribe in which the medicine-men use narcotics. They use as snuff a powder made from the seeds of the *sebil* and through its use produce a state of trance during which their souls wander through the upper world. They wage collective war against disease and spirits and all of the ceremonies have a highly symbolical character. The Matako are very keen observers of taboos, mourning, for instance, is to them a very serious matter. This general interest in religion and the stress of religious beliefs in the native culture reveals itself in the Matako attitude toward Christianity. It is the general opinion of all of the missionaries with whom I discussed the question that the Matako are most eager to accept protestantism and that those who take the new faith do so seriously. They are not only interested in the exterior manifestations of religion, but they understand perfectly the moral problems and the subtilities of faith. The Matako who ask for baptism do so because they feel a genuine need for religion and the converted Indians do their best to adapt their living to new rules. The attitude of the Toba is quite different. They are amused by religion, they realize the help to be obtained from the missionaries, but they do not worry over much about the faith itself. They are light-hearted and and apathetic toward religion. The contrast between the two tribes has always impressed me and I noticed it immediately when I started to inquire about medicine-men. Information proffered by the Matako was always more detailed and extensive than that given by the Toba. The importance of religion to the Matako is not only revealed in spiritual crises; in the soul of a new convert modern religion affects his old life deeply.

000 I am aware that the ethnological material I gathered

I am aware that the ethnological material I gathered among the Matako is too disconnected and fragmentary to be published by itself. I prefer to present it as I obtained it, as notes to the tales. We know so little about the Matako ethnology that even incomplete as these documents are they may be useful and seem to me worth publishing. 5 114

The myths and tales published here were transmitted to me by two informants, Pedro and Martin. Both spoke fairly good Spanish and had lived for many years in contact with white men or mestizoes without breaking their ties with the tribes. Of the two informants Pedro was the more deeply merged in native life. He had his hut near the little village of Las Lomitas, the station of the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación. His hut betrayed the initiative of its owner and his will to accept and adapt himself to new conditions. It was built according to the usual Argentinian pattern and very little in it denoted that the inhabitants were Indians. Despite the trarsformation of the old grass shack into a wooden hut, however, and the iron household wares, the life of Pedro and his family and his neighbors continued in the old pattern. One compartment of the hut was devoted to a mourning wife who observed complete seclusion. Every evening the small hamlet, from which one could see passing trains, was filled with the hoarse grunts of medicine-men. Near the modernized settlement other Indians of the same stock had built a grass village in the ancient fashion and bows and arrows were stuck into the ground ready for hunting or fishing. Pedro was a very intelligent fellow who realized the advantages of learning Spanish and of buying iron instruments from the stores, but he had not lost the sentiments of an Indian. He felt deeply the injuries inflicted upon him daily by white men. Pedro had an open mind, a great sense of dignity and justice, and a deep desire to improve his condition and that of his family. He was as friendly and kind as most Indians are when they do not assume the attitude of beaten dogs. 115

Martin was an entirely different personality. He was very

115 old—the oldest Indian in the mission I believe. Esteemed by everyone, he had developed a consciousness of his respectability that was sometimes a bit comic. He spoke with poise, choosing elegant and sophisticated words the meanings of which he never really understood. His language was a slight parody on the affected speech of certain colonists. In his youth he had lived with his tribe which was still independent of and untouched by European civilization, but later in life, like many intelligent Indians, he deemed it useful and convenient to join the white settlers for a while. He was among the first natives to help the missionaries and became one of the first and best Christians of the Missions. Martin's long contact with mestizo settlers and later with missionaries made of him an informant of lesser value than Pedro. His tales were generally twisted so that they would fit to the new type of living which had developed in Martin's community. In working with me he tried to rationalize the old lore of his tribe as if I were a colonist with no experience in Indian ways. However, his contribution is valuable because he was an old man extremely well informed in primitive customs of his tribe.

177 Martin's tales are not all Indian, although I expressed to him several times my desire to have only native lore. He
538 told me many tales of distinctly European origin. He always insisted that they were known by other Indians and consequently were genuine. As some of these European tales had been told my be Pedro who also denied their foreign source, one may consider them as having been incorporated into the modern folklore of the Indians. Often Indian elements as well as Indian characters in such tales (for instance, the Rainbow playing the part of an Ogre) point out that European motifs have been worked up by the native story tellers and readjusted to the environment. For that reason I feel that tales of recent introduction should not be neglected. They may give precious hints as to the diffusion of European stories among the natives of America, and indicate the way they have been integrated into native culture. The intro-

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duction of these tales to the Matako is quite recent since the Indians have been in regular touch with white settlers for only thirty or forty years.

The most important character in the Matako tales is familiar to all students of North American ethnology — he is the Trickster. His Matako name is *Takxwax*, *Tokxwax* or *Tawkxwax*, according to the region. The last form which I have adopted is used at Algarrobal, near Embarcación. My two informants agreed that *Tawkxwax* was a »loco» a fool and by this word they meant a practical joker, a person who likes to play harmful tricks on people. The bad people in the region were always referred to as »locos». The adventures of *Tawkxwax* strongly suggest those of the famous tricksters of North American ethnology. The resemblance is even more accentuated in the tales of other tribes. In the mythology of the Toba Pilagá the tricks or the adventures are attributed to the fox who is the South American equivalent of the Coyote. The perfect parallels between the stories concerning *Tawkxwax* and those in which the fox is the hero are so numerous and striking that I often tried to make the Matako confess that *Tawkxwax* was the fox of the other tribes. They always denied my identification and insisted that *Tawkxwax* was a man.

Everyone familiar with North American folklore will recognize in these tales many similarities between the Chaco tales and those which constitute the rich oral literature of North American tribes. I am too little acquainted with North American ethnology to draw parallels but no doubt they are numerous. The essential part played by the Trickster in mythology is a feature which cannot be neglected. Parallels between North American and South American Indian tales will be more obvious when I am able to issue the mythology of the Toba Pilagá that I had the opportunity to study more systematically and thoroughly than the Matako. The Matako mythology is only a short introduction to a more rich and complete material.

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I must stress here that the material and the spiritual culture of the Chaco tribes — half nomadic, living on mesquite, game and fish — recalls many of the conditions prevailing among North American tribes, especially those in California and certain aspects of these of the prairies. Most of the parallels which have been drawn between North American and South American ethnology rest on the culture of the very tribes among whom I was lucky enough to get the tales which I present here.

Once more I should like to call the attention of ethnologists to the abundance of material which still may be collected in South America. For a few years more there will remain the opportunity to study primitive Indian cultures functioning in their entirety. But the extraordinary riches of South American ethnology are being wasted and lost. Every year sees the passing of a tribe or of a culture. Old medicine-men, knowing the traditions of their groups, die without transmitting their knowledge. Thus the chances of scrutinizing the past culture of America grow fewer each year. South America is the least known of all the continents and its tribes are the most mysterious peoples. May I give the alarm before it is too late to grasp the now plentiful material?

Unfortunately I had little opportunity to study the phonetics of the Matako language, and I am convinced that my transcriptions might be improved. I used the following system of transcription for the native words.

č is more or less like the Spanish »ch», but slightly palatalized.

x is a surd velar fricative.

k is an aspirated back palatal.

L is the voiceless »l».

ʔ stands for the glottal stop. Glottalized consonants, though existing in Matako, do not appear in the words quoted in this paper. The vowel *a* has a different quality according to the region. Along the Pilcomayo is *a* a mid-back narrow sound quite near the open »o».

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~ on a vowel indicates nasalization.
' on a vowel marks the accentuation.

As far as possible I tried to give the pronunciation of the region of Embarcación, though Pedro spoke another dialect.

A. THE UNIVERSE

1. The Upper and the Lower World (Pedro)

There are two worlds, one above and the other below. Once the world above our heads was in the place of the earth where we live. But the earth (still further) below did not like to be soiled by the excrement of the people dwelling in the sky and therefore it changed places with the earth above. Formerly sky and earth were connected by a big tree (*niLɔk*). The men of this earth climbed up it and went to hunt in the world above. Once a number of them climbed up and succeeded in killing a jaguar. When they divided the meat, they foolishly gave the stomach to an old man. He was so indignant at getting such a miserable portion that he burned the tree, thereby avenging himself. The men who had climbed up could not get down and they still live in the sky. They are a constellation formed by many stars (Pleiades: *patseLai*).

When these first people went to the sky to hunt, they left their children at home. A mother, knowing she would never again rejoin her child on earth, threw him from the sky a deer skin bag filled with honey. The children grew up, they were our fathers.

2. The Compartments of the World (Pedro)

The world is divided into three compartments; the earth the sky and the underworld. In the underworld there are fields like those we have here. The underworld is the abode of the dead. We know it is because we can go there in our dreams to visit our dead relatives. The medicine-men also

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772 know it. When the sun does not shine upon the earth, it
x773 goes down to the underworld. Then the stars and the moon
x539 climb out and shine on the earth.

B. DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD

3. The Great Flood (Pedro)

x539 The rainbow doesn't like menstruating women. Once a
x773 menstruating woman was killed and eaten by the rainbow. As a consequence there were heavy rains and a great flood. When the water receded large pools remained as witnesses of that flood.

4. The Great Fire (Pedro)

On the horizon at the end of the world, there are great fires that burn day and night with no one to tend them. On these fires are large pots in which food is always cooking. There is no one to put the pots on or to remove them. An old man who was travelling in that country saw the pots, but he was not allowed to go near them.

One must never speak of prairies with high grass as the fire would hear and spread itself through the world as it did once before. At that time it burned all the animals and plants. A man and a woman escaped by diving into the water and concealing themselves in the bed of a river. When they left the water they found nothing, not even a tree in whose shade they could sit. A little bird (*tapiatsón*) took his drum and started to beat it close to the stump of a *sopxwayúk* tree[1] just as the Matako do when the algarroba (Prosopis juliflora) is ripening. The trunk grew higher and higher until after a score of days it was a tree with leaves whose shade sheltered the new men. With the tree the forest began to grow again and after a while the world was

[1] In Spanish, *palo zapallo*

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the same as before. The animals returned by themselves — the whole world had not been destroyed, only that section between Manzanillo and Pozo del Tigre.

5. The Great Fire (second version) (Martin)

Formerly people were animals. They were ostriches (Rhea americana), *chuña* (Chunga burmeisterii) and small birds; these were the people of those days. These people said, »Let us go to the land where there are many people.» They were real people, but larger than the men of our day and made of fire. The men who walked in that country were not allowed to make any noise, to speak or to laugh, because those first men were very sensitive. The animal people went to visit these first men. Their children were sitting in front of their doors. The *hornero* (Furnarius R. Rufus) was a little bird who liked to laugh continually. When the children of those first men sat down, light flared from their bottoms. The *hornero* laughed and laughed at this, but his fellows warned him, »Do not laugh so much or they will burn us.» The children heard the *hornero* laughing and they went to their fathers to report that some people had come to make fun of them. Then the first men took fire to burn the others and the world burst into flame. Only the ostrich and the *chuña* succeeded in escaping. The bird *takiatsa* (a red bird with blackish spots) hid in the ground. When the fire died down he came out. He sought and found ashes of the algarroba. The earth was barren, there were no trees to give shade. Everyday the bird sang and sang and three days later the ashes grew into a tree. The bird made the algarroba tree grow so he could have some shade. These birds are still living in the algarroba trees and there are still many of them in this country.

6. The Great Darkness (Pedro)

Once upon a time night lasted for three weeks. No one could see and men were hungry. They ate hides. In order

X539 to get water they had to follow ropes to the river. There
X773 were heavy storms and hail stones hurled through the roofs and the wind blew huts away. Many people died.

7. The Sun (Pedro)

X539 The sun is a big medicine-man. When he is angry the
X773 world turns to darkness. The sun has two huts one of which
821 he leaves in the morning. The other is situated on the side where he goes to sleep. Out of this hut a staircase of five hundred steps leads down under the ground. The sun always goes back to his starting point by an underground passage.

During the summer the days are long because the sun is an old man who walks slowly and with difficulty. It takes him a long time to make his trip. In the winter the sun is a boy who can run quickly. That is why the days are short.

When the sun makes his fire with *palo santo* wood it gets very hot on the earth. The sun is not, but he has a big fire and it is the heat from this fire which we feel on earth. In summer it is hot and the sun scorches the algarroba. When the algarroba is quite dry the sun unleashes a storm in order that the fruit may fall, then it becomes hot again for another harvest. The two harvests of the sun correspond to those of men. (Another explanation of heat is that somewhere very far away there is a big ship, like those on the Bermejo, and it is the smoke of these ships that is the heat.)

8. The Moon (Pedro)

The full moon is old, worn out and tired. Like old people, he walks slowly. When he gets very old he dies, then comes a storm. Afterwards he is born again. All men are the children of the moon. Before he dies he sends them a reminder.
[841] That is why women menstruate when the moon dies.

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The moon is a great thief. He always steals something, cows in particular. Once the men got angry and wanted to kill him. The sun said, »I don't wish you to kill my friend but if you do I will go away.» The men were afraid and they let the moon eat the cows.

The moon had sexual intercourse with a woman. That is why women menstruate. From the intercourse of the moon with that woman a boy and girl were born. They were the first people.

If a woman dreams about an old man she will find that she is menstruating when she wakens. Her soul has had intercourse with the moon who is very old and looks like an old man. Each month when a woman is about to menstruate, she dreams about that old man.

9. Sun and Moon (Pedro)

The sun and the moon are friends. The sun helps and protects the moon. If anybody wants to kill the moon, the sun says, »He is my friend, I will kill you.» The sun went off to catch lice. He found white lice and gave some of them to the moon. The moon was not satisfied with these lice and said. »I am an expert in catching lice.» He went off, but he did'nt return. The sun said, »What is the matter with the moon?» He went to look for him. He found the moon very ill. One of the lice the moon had caught had bored a big hole in his head. The sun brought a comb, dressed his hair and the moon was well again. (VIII, p. 97).[1]

10. Why the Moon is Yellow (Pedro)

The sun wanted spears. He dived into a river and changed himself into a big yellow fish (*atsa*).[2] When the Indians saw this fish they tried to kill him with spears. The back of the

[1] Roman figures refer to the notes beginning on on p. 90.

[2] A *dorado* fish.

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fish was full of spears but he could not be killed. The fish swam off with the spears in his body and distributed them among his people. The moon was not satisfied with the spears he received and he said, »I also can find spears. I am an expert in finding spears.« So the moon went to a river and changed himself into a fish. Men came and drove more than thirty spears into his body. The moon died. The men hauled him ashore, cut him into pieces and ate him. The sun said to himself, »What has happened to the moon?« He went to look for the moon and arrived in the village of the people who were eating the moon. As he watched them eating the moon, he changed himself into a dog and picked up all these bones. Unsuccessfully he tried to reform the moon but there were pieces missing, so he went back again and found the heart. One piece was still missing, it was the gallbladder. He found it at last and that is why the moon is yellow.

11. The Spots on the Moon (Pedro)

The sun wanted some ducks. He made a big net and changed himself into a duck. In this disguise he went to a lagoon where there were many ducks. He swam among the ducks and from time to time he dived under the water drawing a bird down with his net. He killed each one without being noticed by the others. He went back with many ducks which he distributed among the people of his village. He sent an old one to his friend the moon. The moon was not satisfied with this present and decided to go hunting for himself. Like the sun he made a big net and changed himself into a duck. But the ducks in the meantime had become distrustful and wanted to know who the mysterious enemy was who was bothering them. They defecated and obliged the moon to do the same. The odor of the moon's excrement is very offensive and quite different from that of the ducks. The birds recognized the moon and gathered to attack him. They scratched his body with their nails and

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claws and lacerated him in such a way that they almost pulled out his bowels. Hence on the moon's stomach one can see blue scars left by the claws of the ducks.

12. The Constellations (Pedro)

In the sky there are two stars which are very near each other. They are called *tse?yés* and they are said to be brothers. These brothers have a hunting dog which followed a flock of ostriches. Hearing the noise of the hunt one of the brothers went to look for the dog but could not find him. »Where is my dog?», he asked himself. »I did hear him.» The ostriches went up into the sky and the dog followed them. An ostrich feather, dyed red, fell down showing the brother where his dog was. The brother did not know what to do. The other brother came and said, »Let us go up there to get our dog, I am very fond of him.» He took his brother on his shoulders and they both ascended. First they went westward and there they were very near the dog but they did not see him as he had gone eastward following the ostriches. When they went toward the east, the dog crossed over to the south. The brothers went south at about 3 o'clock in the morning. In the summer time the brothers go out very late, but in the winter they may be seen at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

A man built a corral which became a group of stars that appear by night.

Near the Ostrich (the Constellation of the Ostriches or the Pleiades) there is a leg in the sky. The Pleiades *patseLai* are the people who formerly inhabited the earth and who now live in the heavens. They warm themselves round a log which is constantly burning in the sky. The fire runs lengthwise along the log and never goes out. If any one should touch that log it would explode. It is of *palo santo* wood and therefore burns very slowly. The ashes fall on the ground and constitute frost.

Venus is the father of all the stars.

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13. Origin of the Southern Cross and the Pleiades (Martin)

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The jaguar's daughter married the deer. She had two sons by him. One night the mother jaguar killed the deer and brought back a piece of him to her daughter. The daughter recognized her husband. The two sons of the deer broke away from the sons of the jaguar, they started to fight. The sons of the deer in revenge killed the children of the jaguar and took the meat to their grandfather to eat. Then they ran away and shouted, »Our grandfather is eating the flesh of his own children.» The jaguar jumped up to catch them, but the young ones were prepared for him. They had collected a heap of arrows. They shot an arrow into the sky It remained fast. Then they shot another one which stuck to the butt of the first and so on until a ladder had been formed which reached down to the earth. When the jaguar was about to seize them they climbed the ladder up to the sky. There they were saved. Their mother was in pain. The mother had also climbed up to the sky. The children of the deer are the Pleiades and their mother is the Southern Cross.[1]

14. The Rain

The rain is a man who has a red fringed poncho in which he wraps himself when it rains. He rides about on a mule, his head entirely covered by his poncho the fringes of which are the rain. When he lifts his poncho to see the way his eyes flash lightning. The thunder is the roll of his drum. He never stops travelling and wherever he is there is rain. Upon his departure from a place the rain ceases. The rain especially dislikes the *quebracho* tree. He dares not strike this tree lest his testicles be cut by the falling tree. His wife alone is entrusted with the destruction of these trees.

[1] Stars like crosses which appear near the Pleiades in the morning in the middle of September

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15. The Wind (Pedro)

The wind is a man riding on a bad, fast horse. This explains the rapidity with which the wind travels.

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16. The Clouds (Pedro)

The clouds are formed by the smoke from the many fires lighted on the earth. The storm clouds are the smoke of the rain.

17. The Star-women (Pedro)

Once there was a man so ugly that no woman would marry him. One night his mother heard him speaking with a woman. The following morning she asked, »With whom were you talking last night?» She did not know that the woman was the daughter of »The two brothers»[1]. The son remained silent. The mother asked again, »Who was she?» but he still refused to answer. Every night the star-woman would leave her home in the heavens, visit her lover, and then return. She combed his hair and gave him necklaces. Finally the man became good looking. All the women fell in love with him but he would have nothing to do with them as they had despised him when he was ugly. The star-woman took him to the sky with her as her husband. He met his wife's family. One day his wife and the women of her family went to pick wild beans. Before she left the star-woman said, »Do not touch the fire, it is bad, it will burn you.» The man did not obey her, he touched the fire which exploded. He fell down dead. His wife put his head and bones in a bag and dropped it near the house of his father and mother. The bag full of bones fell with a thud. The mother seeing what was in the bag knew her son was dead so she buried his bones.

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[1] Name of a constellation.

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18. The Star-woman (second version) (Martin)

There was a man who was very ugly. Nobody liked him. One night he stood where the others were playing. Looking upward he saw in the sky a pretty red star. He said, »I would like to marry her.» As soon as he had made this wish the star stood near him. The woman said, »I came because you called me.» He told her that he loved her. They were married. But after a few days they quarreled. The woman went back to the sky and the man followed her. The Morning Star is an old man who has a big fire. His fire is cold. The star-woman was the daughter of the Morning Star. In the sky it is very cold. The father of the star-woman burned his son-in-law and ate him. His soul entered an owl called *tyustáx* which says »wek, wek, wek.»

C. THE TRICKSTER

19. Origin of the Corn

Tawkxwax sowed only one gourd in his field. The armadillo went to him and asked for a seed, but *Tawkxwax* refused to give it. The armadillo then cut off the end of his own tail, which was covered with granulous scales, and stuck it in the soil. Beautiful corn stalks soon sprouted from the ground. At that time the armadillo was the only one who had corn. *Tawkxwax* had gourds, melons, sorghum, sugarcane, peanuts, oranges, bananas, but no corn. He called on the armadillo and begged for some grains of corn, but the armadillo refused because *Tawkxwax* had been stingy when he had wanted some gourd seeds. Besides he never gave anybody his new plants. *Tawkxwax* went for a walk to a forest. He got tired and sat down beside a *yuchan*[1] tree. He started to carve this tree into the shape of a horse. He changed the wood into a living animal. In the same way he made a saddle, reins and bridle. Then he set out on

[1] Bombaceae, silk cotton tree. The trunk has the form of a bottle; hence the popular name of the tree, *palo borracho* (drunk wood).

horseback. The people did not know what a horse was as they had never seen one. *Tawkxwax* was hungry so he went to the armadillo's house. There he succeeded in trading his horse for corn. With the corn in his possession, he called all the men together and distributed corn among them. He taught them how to cultivate it. The people at first were afraid. Many thought the plant was poisonous. Others said it was very good food. Finally all were convinced and from that day on people have always had something to eat. Mankind is indebted to *Tawkxwax* for food.

A man who heard of *Tawkxwax's* horse went to the forest in order to carve one for himself. He carved the *yuchan* so awkwardly that he made a tapir. Thus also did men make mules and donkeys.

20. Origin of Certain Wild Plants

Tawkxwax climbed a *yuchan* and fell down head first. As he fell the thorns of the tree tore his body. He removed his stomach from his body and buried it. From it grew a plant (*iletsáx*) the root of which is very large and full of water. His intestines became lianas. Like a cow *Tawkxwax* had two stomachs. With the second he made a plant called *iwokanó*.

21. The Origin of Serpents (Pedro)

In ancient times there were no serpents. One day *Tawkxwax* found a thick rope. He picked it up but threw it away later on. After a while, thinking it might be useful, he went back to get it. He looked and looked but he could not find the rope. At last he found a serpent and thought that perhaps it might be the rope he wanted. A serpent is therefore called *niyǫ́k* or rope. *Tawkxwax* wanted see whether this new animal he found could bite so he began to tease it. The serpent did not bite him. He held fire to the mouth of the serpent until it bit him severely. The first serpent he made poisonous was the *yarara* (*hatenekwę́mę*). When the other

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serpents heard of this they went to *Tawkxwax* and wanted him to heat their mouths too. *Tawkxwax* heated the mouths of the *lančitąx, katitsul* (rattlesnake of the bush) and the coral *čalaxčetáx* The *aguara* (*iwalęk*) remained a very harmless serpent as he was afraid and ran away when *Tawkxwax* began to heat his mouth. The serpents which did not come to *Tawkxwax* to have their mouths heated are not dangerous at all (XI, p. 98).

22. Why There Are Poisonous Serpents (Pedro)

Formerly serpents were harmless and they would have remained so had it not been for *Tawkxwax*. He is a fool, a trickster. He got the silly idea of taking a live serpent and heating its mouth. From time to time he let it bite him in order to see the results of his burning. He would not stop until the fangs of the serpent were full of poison. Then the serpent bit him and *Tawkxwax* became very ill. Since then serpents have been dangerous.

23. Origin of the Sting-ray (Pedro)

One day as *Tawkxwax* was walking by the side of a lagoon he found a piece of leather. He picked it up, looked at it and threw it into the water. Shortly afterwards he decided he wanted the piece of leather but could not find it. He put his hands in the water to feel for it and was stung. He saw that he had been stung by a sting-ray and realized that the piece of leather had changed into a sting-ray.

24. Why the Mistol Trees Walk No More (Pedro)

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In days gone by mistol[1] trees could walk. They could be driven along by people shouting or making a noise to frighten them. They would hop and fly just like grass-

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[1] Mistol (*Zizyphus Mistol*) is very useful to the Matako. They eat its fruits and with its ashes they make alkali which they chew together with coca leaves.

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hoppers. *Tawkxwax* got the idea he would fasten the trees to the ground so that they could not run away. So the trees were fixed to the ground and thus they lost their power to move, the power which had been so useful to men before.

25. The Iguana and Tawkxwax (Pedro)

Formerly the tail of the iguana was very long. *Tawkxwax* set out to catch him but at first he could only succeed in stepping on his tail. At last he caught him but the iguana escaped, leaving its tail in his fingers.

26. Tawkxwax and the Menstruating Men (Pedro)

The earth was under water. Rain made beer and invited everybody to the feast. All the guests came dressed in their most beautiful clothes. The mosquitoes had red mantles (ponchos) but they would not tell how they had stained them because they feared that the rain would be angry with them. They had dyed their mantles with human blood. Although *Tawkxwax* was a wealthy man and had great riches and wonderful garments under the ground, he appeared at the feast in old rags. Offended the rain insulted *Tawkxwax* who went home to change his clothes. When he returned to the feast he had on a poncho, a hat with a broad brim, a handkerchief and splendid boots. The rain became jealous and thought that *Tawkxwax* was too smart. He tried to strike him with lightning. *Tawkxwax* who could not understand why the rain was acting so strangely, cut a branch, sharpened it and put it into the barrel of a Remington gun. Taking careful aim with this weapon he ran after the rain. The rain knowing of the wickedness of *Tawkxwax* asked himself, »Where can I go?« He climbed a tree and from it climbed to the sky. Thus chased into the sky, the rain has not come back because he is still afraid of *Tawkxwax*.

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27. Death and the Ressurection of Tawkxwax (Pedro)

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Tawkxwax could walk under water. Once he made a long journey under water. He got tired and died. But before dying he threw off his skin, skull and bones. He took another body and lived again. *Tawkxwax* is like a god. Like a serpent he can change his skin and still live.

28. Tawkxwax and the Old Woman (Martin)

Tawkxwax followed the trail of some people who went fishing. On the trail he met an old woman. He said, »Aunt how are the boys?» »They are allright, they are shooting fish.» The woman took her bag from her head and gave him a fish. *Tawkxwax* kept the fish and changed his face. He met the same woman for a second time. »Aunt how are you?» »Very well, thank you.» »And your family?» Fine, they are fishing.» The woman offered him a fish. *Tawkxwax* kept the fish and changed his face again. For the third time he went to the woman. When the woman saw the handsome man she became suspicious and said, »I know you now, you are *Tawkxwax* and you want to fool me.» Then she ran away quickly.

29. Tawkxwax and the Wild Pigs (Pedro)

The skunk (*tūxwanáx*) made a drum and organized a great feast to which he invited all the wild pigs. They danced in a circle, as the Indians do, with *Tawkxwax* in the center. When they got very excited the skunk lost some of their fur. The people noticed the terrible odor, but they did not know where it was coming from. A little later on the skunk began to whirl round and round by himself and some of his fur fell off. The odor killed all of the wild pigs present at the feast. More than a hundred pigs were killed in this manner. All the people of the skunk's village were called in to help him skin the wild pigs. After they were skinned he distributed the meat to his people and gave *Tawkxwax*

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a young pig. *Tawkxwax* was not satisfied with his share and decided to show the people that he too could kill wild pigs with his hair. He made a drum and invited the pigs. When he was dancing he let his hair fall, but his hair had no odor and furthermore, the hogs had become distrustful. They ran away with the exception of a young pig which *Tawkxwax* killed with his club. He left the pig lying on the ground and went to his village to tell them he had killed many pigs and invite them to come and help him carry them. The people went with him but they found only the young pig. *Tawkxwax* looked very surprised and said that he could not explain the disappearance of the pigs; they must have come to life and run away leaving only the young pig. To prove his story he showed them the footprints of the hogs. He was then known as a great hunter.

30. Tawkxwax and the Jaguar (Martin)

The Trickster went out for a walk. He heard a jaguar roaring. He said, »What is the matter with you? Why are you roaring?« He called the jaguar and the animal came immediately. *Tawkxwax* asked, »Why do you roar all day long? Are you hungry? If you are you can eat my flesh and leave my bones, but we shall go to your den.« The jaguar accepted *Tawkxwax's* proposal, but *Tawkxwax* said, »It would be better if I rode on your back so I will not be tired and my flesh will be more tender.« The jaguar replied, »All right, ride on me.« The jaguar carried him to the den. *Tawkxwax* said, »Let me go in, give me room to go in this hole.« He was saying to himself, »I will change into a humming bird.« The jaguar became suspicious, he said, »*Tawkxwax*, what are you doing? Are you asking for mercy?« The jaguar felt that *Tawkxwax* was planning to escape. *Tawkxwax* said, »I am only crying before I die.« Then he shouted, »Jaguar, jump on me.« The jaguar jumped, but *Tawkxwax* said, »I am a humming bird« and he ran away leaving the jaguar alone.

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31. Tawkxwax's Skill in Fishing (Pedro)

X539 X773 *Tawkxwax* was married to a Matako woman. He invited his father-in-law to go fishing with him. On the river bank he ordered his father-in-law to light a big fire while he went swimming. He dove into the water and hour later he emerged with *surubi, bagre, amarillo, pacu* and an *asak* fish. They ate all they could. The father-in-law was to carry home the remaining fish but they were so numerous he was obliged to leave many behind. That night *Tawkxwax* beat a drum to call the people. He distributed the fish among them and taught them the art of curing disease. The second day *Tawkxwax* and the people went to fish again. He had big nets made with very strong wooden frames. The men entered the river in a line with the nets in their hands. *Tawkxwax* went downstream and drove the fish up to the nets where they were caught. They were successful in catching fish three times, but when they tried the fourth time the frames of the net broke and the fish escaped. *Tawkxwax* knew that this was going to happen and had warned the men, but they did not heed his warning to use stronger nets and unbreakable frames. Despite their carelessness many fish were taken.

32. The Wars of Tawkxwax (Pedro)

Tawkxwax attacked a fort. His only weapon was a stick with a red flag. Near the fort he waved his flag and the soldiers shot at him. *Tawkxwax* fell dead but in a little while he came to life again. The soldiers shot at him again but the bullets broke like clay pellets. *Tawkxwax* then went nearer the fort and the soldiers shot at him again and again, but the bullets would not leave the barrels of their guns. The Trickster killed all the soldiers and took everything in the blockhouse.

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33. Tawkxwax's Fight with the Armadillo (Martin)

Tawkxwax decided to make war against the *axwenatáx*[1]. Before leaving for battle *Tawkxwax* had his people make weapons of *yuchan* wood. They made many clubs. The armadillo made only one club, but his was of *mistol* (*Zizyphus mistol*), a very hard wood. Before they started to fight they shook hands and *Tawkxwax* said to the armadillo, »If you succed in killing me, put my bones into a *yuchan*.» They fought. *Tawkxwax* struck the armadillo with a *yuchan* club, but it did not hurt him. Each time he struck the armadillo with a club it was broken to bits. The armadillo knocked *Tawkxwax* down with his *mistol* club and killed him. He then left his body for the bees to eat. *Tawkxwax* was dead for many days. One day a fox happened to pass by and saw *Tawkxwax's* bones lying on the ground. He asked the bones what had happened. The fox collected the bones and said, »Get up, *Tawkxwax*» and *Tawkxwax* arose and was restored.

34. Tawkxwax and the Iguana (Pedro)

Tawkxwax found it very convenient to spend the winter underground as does the iguana. He asked the iguana to stay with him. The iguana agreed but only on the condition that *Tawkxwax* should not leave the den to relieve himself. *Tawkxwax* promised, but after a while he could restrain himself no longer and he went out and came back. He did this many times. The iguana noticed that *Tawkxwax* left many foot prints in the earth and as he was afraid some one might discover their hole he ordered *Tawkxwax* to leave. *Tawkxwax* left. Three months later he returned to look for the iguana, but he could not find the entrance to the den as it was closed by a *caraguatá* (*Bromelia*) plant.

[1] In Spanish *gualacate*, kind of armadillo.

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D. ADVENTURES OF THE TRICKSTER

35. Tawkxwax and the Needle (Martin)

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Tawkxwax owned many things. One day he set out to visit a village. When he arrived he found only empty houses. The village was deserted. He walked to a house and there he saw a needle lying on the ground. He asked, »Where are the people?» The needle did not answer. He ordered him to speak but the needle remained silent. *Tawkxwax* got angry and said, »I will step on you and you shall be broken.» He repeated his question once again but still the needle remained silent so *Tawkxwax* stepped on the needle, but the needle stood up and ran into his foot. *Tawkxwax* fell to the ground in great pain, he thought »Why has the needle poked me?» He did not know what to do with that needle in the sole of his foot. He said to himself, »I wish a string would fall beside me.» In answer to his wish a string fell on the ground near him. He passed the string through the eye of the needle and in this way managed to remove it. As soon as the pain stopped he went away.

36. - Tawkxwax and the Excrement (Martin)

Tawkxwax found an empty hut. The owner of the hut was not there and all he saw was a heap of excrement on the ground. He asked the excrement where the owner of the house was. The excrement answered by moving and moving. He did not understand the excrement so he said, »You shall speak so that I can understand you, if not I will strike you.» The excrement paid no attention to him so *Tawkxwax* struck it with a club. The excrement jumped up and stuck to his face blinding him. He did not know what to do. He heard some frogs croaking and thinking there was a pool of water where the frogs were, he dove into it, but as he could not see that the pool was dry, he fell on the hard ground, scratching his face and hurting himself badly. He

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started to walk and at last came to a river where he bathed. He recovered his sight and his face was again in good condition.

37. Tawkxwax and the Mortar (Martin)

Tawkxwax found an old mortar. He said to it, »Where are your owners?» The mortar started to sound »tom, tom tom». The mortar was split. *Tawkxwax* sat on it and his testicles slipped into the rent. The mortar shut and pinched them. *Tawkxwax* could not walk, he said, »What am I going to do? If I had an axe here I could break the mortar.» An axe fell beside him and *Tawkxwax* split the mortar. In the place of his lost testicles he put the fruit of the *caraguatá* (*kyutsáx*). (*Bromelia*).

38. Tawkxwax and the Blancoflor Bird (Pedro)

Tawkxwax admired the feathers of the *blancoflor* (*LeLtáx*) and asked him how they came to be so white. The bird told him that he first collected branches and straw and then set fire to them. He sat in the middle of the flames and when he came out he was entirely white. *Tawkxwax* also wanted to be white so he gathered fuel and lighted a fire, then stood exactly in the center of it. The fire was very hot and so he told the bird that he was burning, but the bird told him to stand the pain and cheer up as only in this way would he become white. *Tawkxwax* stood the flames as long as he could but finally they became too hot and he jumped out and ran away. He saved himself, but his skin was badly burned.

39. Tawkxwax and the Stork (Pedro)

Tawkxwax met a stork (*tsiyá*, probably *Ardea galatea*). He was standing on one leg as is his custom. The other leg was tucked under his feathers. *Tawkxwax* became very interested and asked the stork how it was possible to do this;

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he added that he would like to do the same. The stork said the only thing to do was to cut off one leg. *Tawkxwax* asked how the leg could be put back again and the stork replied that there was nothing more simple, he said, »You have only to jump on a certain kind of wood and you will recover your leg.« *Tawkxwax* asked the stork for a demonstration so the stork hopped to a certain branch and lowered his leg. *Tawkxwax* asked the stork to cut his leg off. After his leg had been removed *Tawkxwax* jumped on a branch as the stork had done but his leg did not grow back. *Tawkxwax* called the tarantula *siwanoLokwetax* and told him that he would give his daughter in marriage to have his leg replaced. *Tawkxwax's* daughter was a beauty and as the spider desired her he put *Tawkxwax's* leg back on, but *Tawkxwax* refused to keep his promise. *Tawkxwax* then climbed a tree, he fell and broke his leg. He asked the tarantula again to mend his leg but the spider refused. *Tawkxwax* would have remained with one leg had it not been for a smaller spider who put his leg back on for him.

40. Tawkxwax and the Stork (second version) (Martin)

When *Tawkxwax* was out walking one day he met a bird standing on one leg. The other one was tucked up under his feathers. *Tawkxwax* said, »Friend, what a beautiful leg you have. I would like to have one leg cut off and stand on the other as you do.« The bird cut *Tawkxwax* leg off and gave it to him to carry away. When *Tawkxwax* was some distance away the bird shouted, »Look, I have two legs and not one.« *Tawkxwax* said, »You, I have two legs and not one.« *Tawkxwax* said, »You have fooled me, why have you been so mean to me?« *Tawkxwax* then went on his way, but he got tired and his leg ached. He thought, »What shall I do now with only one leg.« He saw a spider and he asked her to come down and stick his leg back on with her web. The spider did as *Tawkxwax* wished and he set out again on two feet.

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41. Tawkxwax and the Wild Bee (Martin)

Tawkxwax was walking along the bank of a river. He spent the night on a certain spot near the river. The next day he was very hungry. He resumed his journey and at noon came to a house. The house was surrounded by many pots filled with water. He spoke to the old woman who owned the house. He said, »Grandmother, I am thirsty.» The old woman said, »I have water in these jars.» She let him drink as much as he pleased. As *Tawkxwax* was about to drink he made the water very warm and he said to the old woman, »The water is warm, please go down to the river and bring me some fresh water.» The woman who was nursing her granddaughter said, »With whom shall I leave this child?» *Tawkxwax* said, »Put her in the hammock.» *Tawkxwax* said to himself, »The water shall not flow into the jar until after I have eaten the child.» The old woman went down to fill her jar but the water would not come in. She tried again and again and the jar would not fill. *Tawkxwax* took the child and put a stone in her place. He roasted and ate her and when he had finished his meal he said, »The water shall fill the jar.» After the jar had filled the woman returned to her house. She saw the stone and became very angry and wept. This old woman was a wild bee (*nakwǫ́*) (*moro-moro* in Spanish). She gathered wax and she cast a spell on *Tawkxwax*: »May *Tawkxwax* sleep where he is, may his sleep be very deep.» Then she went in search of him. She found him sleeping under a tree, he snored and slept soundly. »Now I shall fool him» said the old woman. She closed all the openings of *Tawkxwax's* body with wax and smeared wax all over his fingers, his ears, and his bottom. The old woman returned to her house very satisfied with the trick she had played on *Tawkxwax* who swelled up. He called all the birds. They hastened to come and they held a big meeting. They had come to take away the wax, but they could not remove it because they all twisted their beaks. They were quite at a loss and did not know what to

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X539 773 do. There was a little woodpecker whose name was *tenini* and he succeeded in removing the wax. When he chipped off the wax, the blood of *Tawkxwax* spurted on the birds who were stained with beautiful red colors. Only the crow (*siwók*) received the dirt which blew out from *Tawkxwax's* bottom; in that way he got his dirty color.

42. Tawkxwax and the Mud Wasp (Pedro)

Nákwo is a kind of mud wasp which makes his nest with earth. Formerly this mud wasp was a man. When he had gone hunting and left his children at home, *Tawkxwax*, the trickster, happened to pass by and he ate all *Nákwo's* children with the exception of one who managed to escape. When *Nákwo* came back he asked the boy: »Where are your brothers? Who ate them?» The child said, »I know, it was *Tawkxwax.*»

Nákwo followed the trail of the Trickster and finally arrived at the place where he was lying asleep near a pool. *Nákwo* took some clay and stopped *Tawkxwax* mouth, nose, eyes and penis. He also smeared his fingers with mud. The *pitoi* bird (*wits?ãhót*), who was then a man went fishing in the nearby pool. He saw *Tawkxwax* whose stomach had swollen up. The bird went immediately in search of other birds who had become men too. They all came with axes, but when they tried to cut off the mud, their axes broke off. A big bird (*-potsax*) (long-legged wading bird, which eats crabs, in Spanish *aguara*) whose beak is very large tried in his turn, but his axe was not strong enough and broke off. The birds did not know what to do for they no longer had any axes. Then came a very old little bird (with red head and a body of the same color as the owl's) who was armed with a tiny axe, but a solid one. Just as he was opening the anus of *Tawkxwax* all the accumulated excrement spouted on him and covered him with filth. Since that time this bird is very bad looking and his wings are gray.

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43. Tawkxwax and the Jaguar

The jaguar who had no more fire decided to kill *Tawkxwax* who had stolen it. He set out in pursuit of *Tawkxwax* who did not know how to escape the wrath of the dangerous animal. He wanted to fly but he had no feathers. He asked the *potsáx* birds to lend him some feathers. Whenever he met a bird of this species he begged for a feather. Each *potsáx* pulled out one feather and gave it to him. *Tawkxwax* smeared his body with wax in order to stick the feathers on. Thus he managed to fly through the air, escaping the jaguar who stayed on the ground. Now *Tawkxwax* did not know how to fly and he was very awkward. His clumsiness aroused the suspicions of the jaguar who recognized him. He followed him blowing as hard as he could in order to melt the wax on *Tawkxwax's* body. The wax melted and the feathers on *Tawkxwax's* arms loosened and fell off. *Tawkxwax* could not remain in the air without feathers so he fell to earth. On touching the ground he became a man again and went to conceal himself in a hole. As the jaguar could not reach him in his hole he removed a piece of his skin and covered the entrance of the hole where *Tawkxwax* was hiding. *Tawkxwax* became hungry and thirsty but he dared not leave his den for food, for he could see the jaguar at the entrance. After many days without food and water he became very thin and decided he would have to leave. Upon emerging from the den he found that the jaguar had been gone a long time leaving only a piece of his skin at the entrance. *Tawkxwax* was very angry. He then went in search for food.

44. Tawkxwax and the Ostrich

The ostrich (*wanLǫ́x*) (*Rhea americana*) had gone hunting and left his sons at home. At that time the ostrich was a man. The ostrich's children were seated around the fire. *Tawkxwax* came and drove all but one child into the fire. When the ostrich returned and found his children dead, he

X 713 X 539 asked the remaining child who had killed his brothers and the child said, »I know him, it is *Tawkxwax.*« The ostrich followed *Tawkxwax's* tracks and found him in his field. He threw himself at *Tawkxwax* who fled. The ostrich kept at *Tawkxwax's* heels tearing his buttocks with his beak. *Tawkxwax's* wounds were bleeding. He went down a hole into the earth where the ostrich could not follow. The ostrich said, »Come my friend, let us play.« »Not I, *Tawkxwax* answered, you nearly killed me.« The ostrich replied, »But you, you killed my children.« The ostrich stayed near the opening of the hole until he was tired, then he pulled out some of his tail feathers and stuck them near the opening. *Tawkxwax* saw the feathers and believing the ostrich was still there would not leave the hole. He remained underground for a long time and got very thin. Finally he could stand it no longer and crawled to the opening only to find that the ostrich had gone leaving some feathers in his place. *Tawkxwax* was very sick from going without food and water. He could only drag himself on all fours. He found a little fish and as he was dying of hunger ate it, but the fish did not remain in his stomach, it went out through his intestines. He drank some water but it did not remain in his stomach either. *Tawkxwax* then shut his anus with mud in order to retain food and water. He was at last able to eat and he grew fat again.

45. Tawkxwax and the Armadillo's Children (Martin)

While walking along the bank of a river *Tawkxwax* saw some children swimming. He decided to go swimming with them and after going into the water three times he said, »Let us make a big fire to warm ourselves by.« *Tawkxwax* made a snare with lianas and put the nooses around the fire. He managed to have the playing children put their heads through the nooses. They came to the fire for a second time to warm themselves and play. As soon as their heads were in the

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nooses *Tawkxwax* pulled the lianas and tightened the loops around the necks of the children. He removed one of the children, roasted and ate him. When he finished his dinner he said, »What a wonderful meal, I want some more.» The children were the sons of the armadillo (*axwenatáx*, in Spanish *gualacate*, species of armadillo). The *armadillos* had two caves, one under the ground and the second in the »other world». The children lived in the first. *Tawkxwax* dug into the second cave and fell into the »other world». In falling he shouted, »Is there no root here to save me?» At that moment a root shot up under him and *Tawkxwax* did not fall, he remained hanging on the root above the precipice. He could not climb up or down. He thought that a bird could come and get him and a bird did come. The bird said, »What are you doing here, *Tawkxwax?* »I am hanging here and I want you to save me.» The bird said, »Get on my shoulders, but close your eyes.» The bird brought him back to this world, but instead of leaving him on the ground he took him high into the sky and then dropped him. In falling *Tawkxwax* shouted, »May I change into a mortar?» When he touched the ground he was a mortar. He stood up and again became a man.

46. Tawkxwax and the Iguana's Daughter (Pedro)

Tawkxwax had a daughter who was very pretty. One day as he was out walking with her he met the iguana and his daughter. *Tawkxwax* became very interested in the iguana's daughter and asked the iguana if he could sleep with her in exchange for his own daughter. The iguana agreed. He started to copulate with *Tawkxwax's* daughter and she began to cry and complained that he had two penises. The iguana calmed her and went on. After they had finished copulating *Tawkxwax's* daughter was badly torn. In the meantime *Tawkxwax* had slept with the iguana's daughter without harming her. When they met again *Tawkxwax*

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mentioned to the iguana that his daughter was in much pain from being hurt by him. The iguana said that it was *Tawkxwax's* fault as he was the one who had suggested the sleeping arrangement. *Tawkxwax's* daughter went home very ill. She refused to live with her father and blamed him for her being injured. She said that the people were right for treating him as a fool.

47. Tawkxwax and the Birds (Martin)

The birds, who had changed into men, gathered to make a feast. Many women had come to join them and also to become their wives. They drank and they sang. Their songs were very beautiful and the women chose their men and married them. *Tawkxwax* was the only one who sang a dirty song and the two girls who were going to marry him ran away. *Tawkxwax* noticed he was alone, the girls had hidden themselves and his friends were with their women. It was because of his dirty song that he was alone. He went back to his village where the only woman left was his mother. He slept with her and she became pregnant. When her child was delivered she said, »Lift your child.» *Tawkxwax* was ashamed and he said, »Oh mother, do not say that, tell me to lift my little brother.»

The men who sang then are now the singing birds in our forests.

48. The Woodpecker and the Daughter of the Sun

The daughter of the sun was fond of the grubs and honey of the wood bees. She was white and pretty and wanted to marry the man who was able to bring her a large amount of the honey called *ales*, which is very difficult to dig out of the trees. The girl's father told her to go in search of the woodpecker (*siwõk*) who was an expert in getting *alęs* out of the trees. The girl set out for the forest where she heard the sound of an axe; she went toward the sound. She did not

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find the woodpecker, but instead found another bird, the *čitáni*. She asked him for some alés and he started to dig but he did not dig deep enough so the daughter of the sun left him. A little further on she again heard the sound of an axe and this time it was the woodpecker. She stepped on a dry branch which cracked and the woodpecker became afraid and climbed to the top of a tree. From there he asked her what she wanted. She told him that her father, the sun, had sent her to get some *ales* honey and to marry him. Although the girl was very pretty the woodpecker was afraid of her. She asked him for some water because she knew the woodpecker always carried a gourd filled with water. The woodpecker came part way down the tree but he became frightened and flew to the top again. Then she told him that he was wonderful and she wanted to marry him. He came down at last and the girl drank some water and told him she wished to have some honey. The woodpecker gave her much honey and went with her to her home. *Tawkxwax* was jealous of the woodpecker because he wanted the girl as his wife. He asked her if she was willing to live with him instead of with the woodpecker. She said that she did not like bad people. Each evening when the woodpecker returned to his home his wife deloused him very gently with a cactus thorn.

Once the woman, who was menstruating, stayed behind in the village. *Tawkxwax* met her while she was taking a bath. Upon seeing the Trickster the woman became afraid and fled, leaving her clothes on the ground. *Tawkxwax* took her skirt, put it on and changed his face in order to look like a woman. In that disguise he went to the house of the woodpecker. When the woodpecker returned home *Tawkxwax* started to delouse him as his wife did, but with every movement he pricked his head. The woodpecker became angry and suspicious. He called an ant and asked him to pass between *Tawkxwax* legs. »If you see a vulva it is allright, but if you see a penis then sting him.» The ant

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did as he was told and when he saw a penis he stung *Tawkxwax*. He shouted, »Who is stinging me?» He lifted up his cloths and when the woodpecker saw his penis he thrashed him soundly. Then the woodpecker went in search of his wife. After a while he disappeared too and the sun became anxious as to his fate. The sun started to seek him. He followed his trail until his footprints disappeared in a pool. The sun threw his spear into the water and it immediately dried up. At the bottom were two *lagu* fish, one small and the other large. He managed to make the small one vomit but he could find nothing in its stomach. He did the same to the large fish and in its stomach was the woodpecker. The woodpecker came to life and he changed himself into a bird. The sun's daughter disappeared forever.

49. Tawkxwax and the Woodpecker — (second version) (Martin)

The sun had two daughters. He was eating water animals (*lewó*). These animals are like alligators. They have the power to make the wind blow and stir up a storm with lightning and thunder. They fly in the sky and make rain fall. These animals are the rainbows, for people say that the rainbows are living things.

One day the sun went out to gather honey. He returned with some ordinary honey which he gave to one of his daughters, but she was not satisfied with it as he had not brought home the kind of honey she liked. The old man said, »Go and see the woodpecker, (*siwók*) he is the man who eats the kind of honey you like.» The woman set out and at Embarcación she meet him and they were married. After a while she became pregnant. *Tawkxwax* happened to be there. He succeeded in making the woman ill so that she could not go with her husband to gather food. When *Tawkxwax* attempted to violate the woman she resisted him and ran away to her father. *Tawkxwax* who feared the woodpecker very much

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changed himself into the wife. He had the same appearance and dressed the same. When the woodpecker returned home he gave everything he had gathered in the forest to his wife. He saw that *Tawkxwax* was not there. He became suspiscious and noticed that his wife's attitude toward him was changed. His wife went out to urinate and he said to an ant, »Follow this woman and if you see testicles, sting her so that I shall know it is not my wife.» The ant saw testicles and he stung them. The woman came back scratching and rubbing herself. She said, »That wretched ant has stung my leg.» The woodpecker knew that this was not his wife and so he killed *Tawkxwax*.

The woodpecker got up and went to the house of his father-in-law in search of his wife. He found her there, but she had already had her child. Two days later the sun said to his son-in-law, »Go and get me some *lewó*, I like to eat the water animals.» The woodpecker went to a lake and there a water animal ate him. The girl said to her father, »Go and bring back my husband who is in the stomach of the water animal.» The sun went and found the fish that had swallowed his son-in-law. He ordered him to open his mouth and out flew the woodpecker.

50. Tawkxwax and the Dead Horse (Martin)

Passing a village, *Tawkxwax* found the bones of a horse. He gathered the bones together, took a piece of money and laid it with them. Then he said, »Horse, stand up.» The horse stood up and *Tawkxwax* said, »Now I have a horse, I will go on horseback.» He set out. It was night when he arrived at a house. The woman who owned the house had been very kind to him. The horse stood before the house and when it defecated it filled a hat with pieces of money. The owner of the house was very interested in the horse and wanted to buy it. »No, I have only one horse and it is useful to me», said *Tawkxwax*. The old woman finally succeeded

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in buying the horse for a large sum. *Tawkxwax* wanted another horse on which to resume his journey so the old woman let him have a very good one. The people of the house took the horse and tied it where it would have plenty to eat. The next morning when a servant went to fetch the horse he found only bones. The woman said, »*Tawkxwax* has fooled us.» A troop of policemen went in pursuit of *Tawkxwax* and when they came up to him they asked, »Have you seen such and such a man with such and such a horse.» »Yes, very near», said *Tawkxwax*. They travelled a short distance and again met *Tawkxwax*. He deceived them thus seven times.

51. Tawkxwax and the Flood (Martin)

Tawkxwax walked and walked, but he could not find the people he was seeking. »What am I to do?» he said to himself. »I am so lonely.» He took out of himself a piece of soul and made a child from it and called it »son». Now he had someone to talk with. They set out on their way. That evening they stopped and *Tawkxwax* said, »Son, there our tribesmen are gathered, they are happy because they have plenty of fish.» They went out and met their friends. The chief said, »Here is the man who will play many bad tricks, he will harm us.» The people feared him because he was a fool and liked to play pranks on them. The people of the village were very fond of fish and they caught them in a great *yuchan*[1] with the interior hollowed. The whole sea was in the interior of this tree which was as large as a barrel. Each day they caught many fish in it, but they were all small ones. If a large fish had been caught it would have broken the tree. One day *Tawkxwax* approached the tree and he saw a *dorado* swim close by it. He said, »I will catch this beautiful fish and skin it.» The people said, »Don't touch the fish,» and they watched the man lest he harm the fish.

[1] Bombaceae. See not 1, p. 18.

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When they were off guard *Tawkxwax* struck the fish. As soon as the fish felt the blow the tree broke. The tree was broken and the sea began to flood the earth. A chief sank his stick into the ground and the sea stopped as if it were held back. The people were very angry with *Tawkxwax* and said to him, »You go down stream, the sea will follow your trail.» *Tawkxwax* set out and the sea followed his trail. The sea caught up with him and be was drowned: I the middle of the sea *Tawkxwax* changed himself into a calabash and floated. The sea was quiet. The people said, »What has happened to *Tawkxwax*?» They put their hands into the water and took out some of *Tawkxwax's* hair. They knew then that the man was dead.

52. The Flood and the Son of Tawkxwax

Tawkxwax had no wife, so he buried his penis in his arm and his arm became pregnant. He shook his arm vigorously and a baby boy fell out. As soon as the baby struck the ground he started to grow. After the child was born *Tawkxwax* went to look for a woman who could take care of him. He gave the baby to an old woman who cared for him and nursed the child. Whenever she asked the boy to tell her the name of his father he remained silent. One day the boy asked the woman to give him a piece of string for a bow. He cut some reeds and made arrows for fishing. He went fishing. In ancient times all the fish were gathered in the trunk of a big *yuchan* tree full of water. It was there that the child went fishing. He killed many fish and brought them to the village to distribute them among the people. The next day he went back to the *yuchan* and speared more fish. On returning to the village he saw that some neighbors had arrived and that his fish supply was not sufficient to feed them all. He returned to the *yuchan* and shot a beautiful yellow fish. As soon as the arrow struck the fish it broke the tree with its tail and the water spread over the

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earth. There was a great flood. The child was afraid and he ran away, but the water followed him and he did not know how to stop it. He was so afraid that he climbed a tree, from the top of which he could see that the entire world was under water. At midnight the tree crashed and the boy was drowned. The water tore his hair off and his scalp drifted away. The child had followed a dry river bed in the vicinity of Las Lomitas. The father of the boy, *Tawkxwax*, walked along the bed of a river. When the old man became sleepy he stopped the water by sticking his spear into the ground. In the morning he took his spear out and the water ran on. In seeking his son he joined all the waters and put them together very far from here, in the neighborhood of Buenos Aires. While he was gathering the waters together he noticed a small river. He wanted to stop the water so he put his hand into it. He felt something in his hand and when he looked he saw that it was the hair of his son. In this way he knew of his son's death. *Tawkxwax* dived into the water and never came back. He is the master of the fish.

In another version the flood is related in this way: One day *Tawkxwax's* son went fishing for the women of the village who were pulling out *caraguatá* (*Bromelia*). As there were many women the first catch was not sufficient and *Tawkxwax's* son went back to the tree to catch more fish. He killed the big yellow fish *atsa*. The water followed him everywhere and since that time it has spread over all the world.

53. The Culture Hero Carancho and the Monsters

Once upon a time there was a tree, the top of which was a fork. This tree could bend over and strangle the people who stood at its base. The *carancho* (*ahu?tsáx*) who had eyes in the back of his head as well as in the front, saw the tree bending down to seize him by the neck. He jumped aside and struck it with a stick. Blood spurted from the tree and it died.

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Ča?ačute was a man-like spirit. He liked to steal women. One day he kidnapped Carancho's wife. The vulture went to fetch her. The spirit had a young jaguar which watched the entrance to his hut and ate anyone who dared to come near. Carancho shot the jaguar and killed it, but *Ča?ačute* still had a big bird *axwéntax*[1] who ate men just as the jaguar did. *Ča?ačute* thought the bird would eat the Carancho, but the vulture killed it with the spurs on his feet.

There was also a monster (*kaxtéx*) with a big stomach and a tremendous mouth who swallowed everyone he met. Carancho went to dig some honey from a tree with an axe. *Kaxtéx* came and asked him for some honey but instead of giving him honey the Carancho sharpened a piece of *palo-santo* at both ends and threw it into the mouth of the monster. The stick went into his stomach and killed him.

The vulture also killed another monster (*kalačináx*) whose leg was a blade made of iron. He would kill anyone within his reach with a sweep of his leg which he used like a scythe.

E. SPIRITS

54. The Welán

The *welán* are like fire by night and when they go out they stir up the winds. Sometimes they appear as white men with mausers, carabines or Winchester guns. They are very fond of fresh meat and eat everything they find, cats, dogs and so on. Their strength is very great and they furnish strength to the men they enter. The persons possessed by a *welán* become furious and so strong that they can break a lasso. The *welán* very often steal children and carry them away under the earth. The man who is dealing with a *welán* knows all the roads and pools and is never lost.

[1] Big bird with a tuft of feathers on its head.

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X 539 X 773 776 [756] He can be near the Pilcomayo[1] or in the bush without losing his way.

To meet a *welán* means death. Only the medicine-men are allowed to speak to them without danger. If a person is stolen by a *welán* he will become a medicine-man for he understands the ways and the language of the *welán*. The *welán* appear only at night. In order to ask them questions it is necessary to apply to a medicine-man who knows their language. The medicine-man enters a *yuchan* tree, the *welán* blows on him and the medicine-man in turn blows upon the people. By night the *welán* come to visit the medicine-men.

When a *welán* takes a person away that person can no longer speak and does not wish to remain at home any longer. He must be sung over for a month, at the end of which time he becomes a medicine-man.

55. Origin of Disease

X 539 X 773 753 A man was caught by a *welán* who made him a chief *welán*. The man who had become a *welán* changed his mother into one also. One day a man died and the people charged the *welán*-man with his death. They invited the *welán* to visit them under the pretence of presenting him with a sheep. The man accepted the invitation but before going he told his mother he would probably not return again. He went to the others who were glad to have him accept their invitation. They gave him a sheep, asking him to eat it immediately, but the *welán* refused and said that he would like to eat it upon reaching his home. So he went taking the animal with him. The men who had planned to kill him ran ahead and hid themselves on the path he was following. When they heard the bleating of the sheep they shot at him and the *welán*-man was mortally wounded. Feeling how deep the point of the arrow had penetrated he

[1] The big swamps formed by the Pilcomayo are real labyrinths in which one may become lost.

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told his murderers that they had killed him, but that he would revenge himself by killing them too. He took some of the blood which ran from his wound and threw it at them. The blood changed into disease and from that day on men have been killed by disease. Before that time disease did not exist. (XIII).

56. The Welán-Woman (Pedro)[1]

A woman was heard crying one night and when the men asked her what the trouble was she said that they had killed her son and that she was going to eat their sons. At midnight she left her house and caught and ate a child. She did this many times. When the parents of the children kept awake to protect them the *welán*-woman made herself invisible. Finally they could stand it no longer and decided to kill the woman. They killed her but because she was a *welán* she came to life again and went right on killing and eating children. The men realized she could not be killed permanently so they decided to look for another shelter. They hollowed out a *yuchan* and entered it but it was very hot and they were obliged to leave. They slept in the open and the woman ate many children. From there the *welán*-woman proceeded to another village, Pozo del Tigre, and started eating children there. The men of Pozo del Tigre proved more astute. They killed the *welán*-woman and then they started a big fire and burned her. When she was in the fire the embers cracked up and jumped in all directions. Those which fell in the forest changed into jaguars domestic cats, pumas, tapirs and snakes. Those which fell into the water became rayfish, *surubi*, *piranya*, *bagres*, *pacu* and other water animals.

57. The Spirits (Pedro)

The spirits, that haunt the imagination of the Matako, are called *hoʔnat-Lele* (dwellers of the ground) or *honatsi-Lele*

[1] This tale is the sequel of the preceding.

(inhabitants of the night). In Pedro's pronunciation the word for ghost was *na-Lele*.

When a spirit enters a body the person must sing, otherwise the spirit will never leave his victim, he will make him feel hot and cold alternately. All medicine-men have experienced these changes and the white men call malaria the disease caused by the presence of a spirit in a person's body.

Near Las Lomitas there is a dog spirit. His hair is like the hair of a sheep, his eyes like those of an owl only very sunken. He is as tall as a calf. He sometimes comes by night to the bush near Las Lomitas and catches women whom he makes sick. It is difficult to see him because when he has no intention to do harm he runs away when people approach him, as do the *hoʔnat-Lele*.

There exists a species of spirits called *ihiɋL* which look like owls. One by the name of *Tapitax* invented pottery. Sometimes pots are found which belong to him. They are large and are buried in the earth up to the brim.

The *hoʔnat-Lele* are bad spirits. They have the appearance of men, only they are lean and dark. They live in *yuchan* trees and roam about during the summer months, in winter they go underground. They make their presence known by singing and whistling. They make mead from honey and *algarroba* husks. They pile together the fibers of the husks.

58. The Man among the Spirits (Pedro)

A man was caught by the *hoʔnat-Lele*. He remained with them for more than a year. When he returned he found himself in the middle of fields. He married a woman-spirit and lived the life of the spirits. Once he went with his wife to fetch honey out of a tree, which according to his wife, was full of it. It was midnight and as the man could not see, his wife pulled his eyelashes out and gave him hers so that he could see in the darkness. To dig out the honey the woman-spirit used an iron implement like a cutlass. She

stuck it into the tree, which immediately opened and let the honey flow out. When the honey stopped flowing she removed the iron and the wood closed without leaving a scar. The *ho?nat-Lele* sleep during the day and work at night. They have their sexual intercourse during the day. The man could not get accustomed to the life they led because he was unable to sleep during the day. The houses of the spirits-of-the-earth are like long corridors.

59. The Man and the Woman Spirit (Pedro)

While walking in a forest one day a man met a woman who told him her husband was out hunting. She asked him to sleep with her. They slept together and the woman told the man that he must go as her husband would return soon, but that he must visit her again. The man left, but on his way he felt excited again and his penis became erect. He ran back to the woman's house and slept with her once more. When they were through she told him that he must hurry for her husband was now quite near. She promised to send him his son in two days. The man ran away as fast as he could but he heard a storm coming up and realized that it was the woman's husband chasing him. The man hid in a hole which he covered with *čaraguatá* (Bromelia) leaves. The storm passed by without seeing him. The man set out again on his journey. Early in the morning of the following day the woman's son was delivered. At noon the child was grown up. His mother told him where his father lived and asked him to go there but to come back in four or five days. The child obeyed. When he got back to his mother he heard that his father had taken sick after his departure. No one had told him but he knew nevertheless. He returned to his father and cured him. When his father was well again they went to the forest to get some honey. Because he was the son of a man and a spirit the child always knew just where to find honey. The spirits hear the buzzing of the bees produced by their

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small spinning tops. They found plenty of honey. The child then returned to his mother's house. The father became ill again and the medicine-man who attended him was very ignorant so the man died. The son heard of it and returned to his father's village to punish the people who let his father die. He started an epidemic of smallpox which killed everybody except his father's family. One man from the village took refuge in another village, but he died anyway, although the people who had received him were not harmed. The son did not kill all the Matako, he destroyed only the men who had not taken good care of his father. The woman, her husband and the child were spirits.

60. The Wood-spirit (Pedro)

Čałačute[1] is a bush-spirit in human form. *Čałačute's* father was old and ill. The cause of his sickness was the dirty and worn condition of the jaguar skin on which he slept. A new skin was needed to make him well again. *Čałačute* went to hunt a jaguar. He asked people he met on the road to show him the jaguar's tracks, which they did. When he arrived at the path followed by the jaguar he lay down as if he was dead. The jaguar came and thought he was really dead. He dragged him into the forest and nudged him to see if he would move, but *Čałačute* remained very still. The jaguar pulled the tongue of *Čałačute* out in order to determine whether or not he was dealing with a corpse, but he did not give any sign of life. Then *Čałačute* took up a club of *matako* wood, like those used by the Chulupi Indians, and struck the jaguar a terrible blow on the head, killing him. The jaguar was then skinned and *Čałačute* returned to his father and presented him with the skin. His father's health was immediately restored. As soon as the skin became dirty *Čałačute's* father was stricken with illness and not until the skin was replaced did he recover.

[1] About *Čałačute* see p. 41.

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Ča!ačute was a tall and stout man. He never got tired and could carry a jaguar on his shoulders with ease. He was valiant and would attack single handed the villages of his enemies. His method was as follows: He would walk to the center of the village and go straight to the chief's hut. He would then ask the chief for a whetstone. On this he would sharpen his spear and then kill the chief without harming the rest of the villagers.

Whenever an Indian married, *Ča!ačute* would kidnap his wife. His house was full of stolen women. One day he took his brother's wife. The offended man went to *Ča!ačute's* house to get her but *Ča!ačute* would not give her up. The brother left and *Ča!ačute* followed him as he was going to kill him. The brother hid himself in the bush beside the trail and as *Ča!ačute* passed he shot an arrow into his armpit. *Ča!ačute* died and all the men, thoroughly pleased, went to get the women *Ča!ačute* had stolen.

61. Ḳatáu, the Spirit of Smallpox

Two parties of young men went in different directions in search of honey for mead (Spanish *jalapa*). The first party went so far from the village that they were obliged to camp in the forest. They suddenly heard roars of a man who was a good two miles away. After a short time they again heard the roars and groans. They were repeated over and over again. The men realized it was *Ḳatáu*. He is an *ăhat*, a spirit, tall and stout who can go through the jungle as quickly as if he were following a beaten path. He has a roar like a bull. As soon as the men heard the roar they put their fire out. *Ḳatáu* sensed the presence of someone so he passed very silently. When he was far from the camp of the men he roared. The men heard his roars again and again until they gradually became lost in the night. Upon returning to the village they learned that the other party had also heard the roars of *Ḳatáu*. The men made mead (an intoxicant) from honey and they sang and danced very

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much. The medicine-men said that the roars of *Ḳatáu* meant that an epidemic would come. Shortly afterward it broke out and many people died.

62. Ḳatáu and the Honey-hunter

Two young men went out together to get honey. One of them returned with a bag full of honey but the other returned empty handed. Very much ashamed at his failure to get some honey the boy returned to the forest to search again. Passing by a tree he met a man, very stout and tall, whose hair was fastened by a headband made of palm leaves. The boy wanted to kill the stranger but the stranger said that if his life were spared he would help the boy look for honey. The boy agreed. *Ḳatáu* asked the boy if he wanted *lachiwana*, *rubiecita* or ordinary bee honey. *Ḳatáu* said he could not give him wood-honey as his bag was much too small. The boy was given so much honey that he had to throw some of it away because he could not carry it all. He went back to the village bent under his load, he made mead and invited the villagers to help him drink it. After many drinks he became drunk and told his friends that he had met the *Ḳatáu*.

63 .Asus, the Bat-spirit (Pedro)

A bat joined the people of his village to go to the fields and sow grain. Whenever the men who were sowing became thirsty the women would bring them water. *Asus*, the bat, worked naked and when his wife went to give him some water she saw that he had a round tail. She was so afraid she forgot to give him the water and she ran away. The bat wanted to stop her but he couldn't. He became very angry and during the night he cut her head off. Since that time he has been cutting off the heads of women and piling them close to the hollow *yuchan*[1] where he lives. *Asus* was

[1] See note 1, p. 18.

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very cruel and the men of ancient times did not know where to flee. They tried to dig out the *yuchan*, but *Asus* cut off their heads and they are still enclosed in the *yuchan* where they are spirits. *Asus* hangs the heads of the women close to the hollow *yuchan* in which he lives. He never goes out during the day, only at night. Men must be very careful not to sleep in the open, otherwise the bat will cut their heads off.

F. ORIGIN OF WOMEN, FIRE, MYTHICAL CHARACTERS

64. The Creation of Women (Martin)

The first men lived by themselves, they had no women. They had only a mother, a very old woman who had her house some distance from theirs. Every day the men went to hunt birds and deer. They ate the meat in the forest but saved the blood to give to their mother. The old woman said to herself, »What will these men do alone?» She made some small pots and put in them the blood her sons had given her. Her sons wondered why she was so secretive and never joined them, but every day they gave her more blood which she stored in her little pots.

During the night one year later the men heard children's voices coming from their mother's house. The men said, »How can this old woman make children». They watched and in the morning they saw five girls. The old woman had produced them from the blood of the deer which she placed in the pots she had made. The old woman is a falcon, called by us *tale*.

65. The First Women (Martin)

The first people were animals who could speak. They lived by themselves without women. They fished every day and their storehouses were filled with fish. One day they found that some one had stolen everything they had stored. They decided that the best thing to do was to leave a guard to

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X539 X713 keep watch. They left a parrot. The bird climbed a tree and the others said, »When the thieves come, you must screech and we will run back.»

Shortly after the animals had left, the parrot heard voices coming from the sky. He looked up and saw women climbing down on a rope. They took everything they could eat. Then they slept under the tree in which the parrot was hiding. The bird instead of doing what he was told dropped small twigs on the women. At last the women awakened and said, »Who is in the tree, maybe they are ants, or perhaps it is a parrot.» They started to look and finally discovered the parrot hidden among the foliage. They picked up the seeds of a tree (*árbol del sapo*) and they threw them at the parrot. One of the seeds struck the parrot on his tongue and from that time on the parrot has had a black tongue. It seems that while the parrot was on watch the iguana heard the noise made by the women and he warned his friends but they would not pay any attention to him as the iguana was believed to be deaf. The descent of the women took place while the iguana was eating, just after he had come back from the forest with firewood.

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In the evening the other people came home. They said, »Where is the parrot?» The parrot was mute, all he could do was make gestures and point to the sky. They looked at his tongue and found it black.

The next morning the *aipés*[1] (or *akpés*) was left to guard the food. At first the women were afraid, then they caught him and pulled out his tongue which they replaced with a fruit seed of the *árbol del sapo*. The lizard remained mute like the parrot. At night when the people found him they were very surprised to find that he was speechless. They held a council to determine who should guard the camp that night. They chose a hawk[2] for a sentry. The women climbed down

[1] Lizard very much like the *uuto* lizard. It lives on trees.

[2] A kind of black hawk. It eats serpents and rodents. The Matako call it *čalená*.

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the rope as they had done before. The bird was sitting on a tree stump. The women could not see him because he was black and the stump on which he was sitting was also black. As they were stealing the fish the hawk screeched and the people hastened back to see who was there. The women threw seeds at the hawk but he protected himself with his wings. He cut the rope by which the woman had reached earth and they were unable to return to the sky. They were taken as wives by the men. One man lagged behind, he was the armadillo. He dug in a heap of refuse and there found a woman, but he scratched one of her eyes out with his nails. For this reason there are one-eyed women. The women ate with their vulvas and it is said that their vulvas had teeth. The *carancho*[1] — the culture hero — broke the teeth of their vulvas thereby making it possible for men to sleep with women.

66. The First Women (second version) (Pedro)

Once upon a time men lived without women. The women lived by themselves and were savages. They came and plundered the crops raised by men. The men wanted to know who was responsible for the damage done to their crops. They asked a parrot to watch the crops for them. The parrot sat on the top of a tree and he saw the women coming down from the sky. Instead of calling the men he said nothing and as a joke threw a piece of wood at them. The women saw him and invited him down to play with them. He accepted and the women caught him and pulled his tongue out replacing it with a piece of coal.

A *gallinazo* (vultur, *Cathartes foetens*) was chosen to watch the fields next. He promised to inform them by whistling as soon as he saw the women. The vulture concealed himself among the leaves of a tree and when he saw the women he whistled. The men, who were hidden at a distance, ran

[1] Falco Plancus.

X 539 X 773 up to their fields and tried to catch the women. They buried themselves in the ground in an effort to escape, but the armadillo said he would dig them out. He dug out one after another. The men took them. The same thing happened each time he pulled a woman out of the ground. In the end, angry because he could not keep a wife for himself, he put out the eye of a woman and made her so ugly that no one wanted her. From that time on men have had women.

X 539 X 773 826 The wild women had toothed vulvas. A bird saw then eating corn with their vulvas. He warned the people, but *Tawkxwax*, the Trickster, would not believe him and slept with one of the women, who cut his penis. *Tawkxwax* took a bone and put it in place of his lost organ. He then went in pursuit of the woman and found her just as she was crouching to light a fire. He threw a stone between her legs and broke the teeth of her vagina. From that time on men have had sexual intercourse with women without being mutilated.

67. The Stealing of the Fire (Pedro)

X 539 X 77[illegible] 372 In olden times the jaguar was the sole owner of fire. He would give some of it away only if presents were given him in return. The people would take fish to him and in exchange the jaguar gave them fire with which to cook. Once a rat with a flattened head, the *sičúm*, tried to steal some fire. He dug his way into the earth until he was underneath the hearth of the jaguar. The jaguar had been watching his fire and he saw the rat just as he was about to take an ember. He struck the rat on the head and that is why it is flat now. Another rat succeeded in stealing an ember. This rat has a black spot on his neck. He was lucky enough to get close to the fire without being seen. He picked up an ember and ran off holding it against his neck. He still has a burnt spot there, the mark of the fire. Using the inside of a cactus as tinder he lighted a big fire and then he distributed it. That is why all men have fire.

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68. The Stealing of the Fire (second version) (Martin)

At the time when there were just animals, the jaguar was the only one to have fire. He bad a big hearth. A little rodent, the *wiyés*, passed by. Whenever the jaguar turned his head the rabbit would put some embers aside. The jaguar saw that he was touching the embers so he said, »Don't touch the fire, you will burn yourself.» The little animal pretended that he was cold and was shivering. He picked an ember up and put it under his chin. He said to the jaguar, »I go, I feel warm». He ran away and threw the ember into the middle of a meadow. All the world began to burn. The jaguar went to put the fire out, but he could not. In this way the people of the world got fire.

Now the jaguar had no fire. He decided to take it away from man. He went to their village and sent a woman with a jar full of water to put out the fire. The woman emptied the jar, but could not put out the fire. She and the jaguar got their soles badly burnt. Hence the soles of a jaguar's paws are dark.

The jaguar went back to his den very ill. He remained there a long time in such condition. As no one came to bring him fish in exchange for fire and as he did not know how to hunt, he suffered greatly from hunger. He spent days and nights in his hut on an empty stomach and he was very miserable. One day a little tiger cat (*silak'ai*) called on him. This animal was an expert in hunting and he decided to teach the jaguar how to catch food. The tiger cat leaped on animals, killed them and brought his victims to the jaguar. The first victim of the tiger cat was an *aguara*, (*potsax*) a very large bird which eats crabs. The cat jumped on the *aguara* but was not able to kill him outright. The bird flew into the sky and it was not until they were 300 feet above the ground that the cat killed him. They dropped to earth but the cat was not injured. He took the bird to the jaguar. Within ten days the jaguar learned to hunt by himself. He killed

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X 539 X 773 animals and ate them raw because he had no fire to cook them with.

In ancient times the jaguar was a woman and the rodent who stole the fire from her was a man. Later they were changed into animals.

[372] The Trickster, *Tawkxwax* put fire into the *sunchu* wood and that is why we make our fire-drills with this wood[1].

69. Origin of the Mead (Pedro)

X 539 X 773 2/3 In ancient times there was no mead. An old man tried to make it with some honey (*nesla*). He mixed the honey with water and left the mixture to ferment for one night. The next day he tasted it and found it very good. The other people did not want to taste the drink as they thought it might be poison one. The old man said. »I will drink because I am very old and if I died it would not matter.» The old man drank much of the mixture and he fell down as if dead. That night he awoke and told the people that the beer was not a poison. The men carved a larger trough (*tsemLák*) and drank all the beer they made. It was a bird who carved the first drum, he beat it all night and at dawn he was changed into a man.

70. The Arrow Bridge (Martin)

X 539 X 773 There was a very clever young man. He was good and never did anything wrong, but people did not like him. He went away and joined some people of the old times, men who had lived long, long ago and who were very intelligent. They took him away to a city in the middle of the sea. The old men thought that the boy would never be able to leave this place, but he made a bow and some arrows. He shot first arrow into the shore opposite, then he shot a second one into the butt of the first, and then a third into the butt of

[1] The second and third part of this version has been narrated by my informant Pedro.

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the second, and so on until he had a bridge of arrows from the land in which he was living to the land across the sea. He crossed on the arrows and took them away when he had landed on the other side. The people of ancient times could not understand how the boy had crossed.

These people had horses as big as houses. The boy rode a mule. There was a river there with a strong current and the only way to cross it was by a ford. The people thought that the boy would be drowned, but he was clever and did not cross until he came to the ford. This young man might have been *Tawkxwax*.

71. The Magic Pregnancy (Martin)

There was a deaf mute who cast a spell on the daughter of a spirit and made her pregnant. This fool was perhaps the Trickster, *Tawkxwax*. Everbody was jealous of the man who had made the daughter of the spirit pregnant because he was very rich. After the birth of the child the grandfather gathered all the men. Each one wanted the child to call him father so that he could marry the girl. But the child despised them all. The grandfather remembered that there was a deaf-mute in the village and so he sent his men to get him. As soon as the child saw the deaf-mute he ran toward him and kissed him so the men of the village knew that he was the father of the child.

72. The Magic Pregnancy (second version) (Pedro)

The *chuña*[1] was a man. He took some sperm and molded (XV *a*) it to look like salt, then put it on a path. A young woman going along the path saw this white stuff and thinking it was salt started to lick it. She became pregnant. Later on she gave birth to a boy. No one, not even the mother of the child, knew who the father was. In order to determine the father of the child the girl's father made

[1] Bird, *Chunga burmeisteri*.

X539 a little bow with arrows and asked all the men of the country
X773 to present it to the child. The man from whom the child would accept the bow would be his father. More than a hundred men gathered to present the bow to the child but he would take it from no one. At last the *chuña* appeared and the child took the bow from him without hesitating. When the people of the village discovered that the *chuña* was the father of the child they got angry and wanted to kill him, but the *chuña* married the woman.

X539 As soon as the child recognized his father, the people
X773 rushed toward the bird to kill him. He did not know how to
825 defend himself, but his wife gave him a sling and with this he defeated his enemies. During the fight he threw a stone which struck the neck of the *potsax*. This bird was so badly hurt that the blood spurted out of the wound and after it dried the neck of the bird had turned black and it had remained so ever since. The *Lokotax* bird was struck by a stone which tore off his scalp and to this day he is bald. The yulo (*wutnax*) was struck in the eyes and now his eyes are circled by a red band. The *ištiwintáx* bird was hit on the nose and his nose has remained swollen and red. The *tok* bird was wounded in the breast. The woodpecker was hurt on the head. Although the *chuña* was the victor of the battle a bird (*nęčę*), very like the *chuña*, succeeded in making his nose bleed and that is why the *chuña's* beak is red.

73. The Magic Pregnancy (third version) (Martin)

X539 In ancient times there were many people and in one tribe
X773 there was a twenty year old woman who had never been with a man. One day her father and mother noticed she was pregnant. She had left the house to get some water and on her way had found something ressembling a small white ball. She picked it up and sucked it like a piece of sugar and from this she became pregnant. When the child was born it was not known who its father was. All the men wanted to marry the girl but she did not care for any

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of them. The girl's father gathered all the men together and showed them the baby boy and said that the man the child pointed to was his father. Each man stood before the child but he recognized no one. Suddenly an old woman remembered that the *chuña* had not been in the gathering and so he was sent for and as soon as the child saw him he pointed him out as his father.

74. The Girl and the Viscacha (Martin)

Once upon a time there was a girl and each evening she went to a certain spot a short distance from her home where there was a rabbit burrow and she could hear the rabbits (Spanish *viscacha*)[1] making all sorts of noises. The woman said, »If a rabbit should come I would marry him.» A rabbit appeared. »You called me so I am here.» The girl said, »I love you, I will marry you.» They slept together. The following night the rabbit went in search of common honey and *lachiwana* honey. Before sunrise he returned with a load of honey and other food which he had found. The rabbit could not venture out during daylight as the light blinded him. The next night his wife wanted to go in search of food with him. He pulled out one of his eyelids and put it in the eye of his wife so that she could see in the dark. The woman was pleased and she remained to live with her husband. Since that time she has never worked in the daytime.

75. The Girl and the Big Armadillo[2] (Martin)

There was a very pretty girl loved by all the men but she would have nothing to do with any of them. The armadillo (*howanáx*) dug his way under ground and succeeded in entering the girl's house. Every night he went to her by this

[1] My informant called viscacha a large rodent of the Chaco which I was unable to identify.

[2] This myth hardly intelligible is a fragmentary version of a long Chiriguano tale, derived from an old Tupi-guarani myth, already noted in the sixteenth century.

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underground passage. Finally the girl became pregnant and her parents asked, »With whom have you been sleeping?« »With the armadillo«, answered the girl. They were married and then the armadillo sowed his field. His plantation was a splendid one. At harvest time he had gourds, beans and all the best fruits but a fox began to damage them. Every day he returned and stole melons. The armadillo picked a big pumpkin and left only a few roots stuck in the ground. By this method he planned to trap the fox. He expected the fox to dig under the pumpkin and then the pumpkin would fall on him. The fox saw the trap and would not go near the pumpkin. The mother-in-law of the armadillo went into the garden and fell into the trap. She was crushed by the big pumpkin and her daughter could not help her for the pumpkin was too heavy. The armadillo came and lifted it with ease.

76. The Son of Atsa

While fishing a man caught an *atsa* fish. When he pulled the fish out of the water it said, »Give my heart to your wife.« The fisherman gave his wife the *atsa's* heart. That night his wife gave birth to a child. The neighbors heard the child crying during the night and the following morning they saw the child. They could not understand what had happened as the day before the woman had not been pregnant. Someone guessed it might have been the heart of the *atsa* fish. The following day the boy put on his spurs and left. He arrived at the Mission and asked the father where the monster lived. He tried to keep him from going to see the old female monster but the boy would not listen. When he arrived at the old woman's house she offered him a seat, then she spread around the house a powder which made the ground turn and the boy fell with the old woman into a hole. The old woman returned to the surface alone. The boy stayed in the hole with the other people she had captured. The boy's brother went to his sister-in-law and asked

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what had happened to his brother. She told him and the boy decided to try to rescue him. He arrived at the old woman's house but sat down with great care. He grabbed hold of the old woman and started to beat her, asking for his brother. The brother was freed and he told about the other people being held captive. They beat the old woman until she set them all free. The people rescued the brothers appointed them *caciques* (XVII) and went home with them. Upon reaching home the elder brother's wife wanted to become the younger brother's wife as well, but he would not hear of it as he was afraid of his elder brother.

G. THE ANIMALS

All animals are still men, their souls are men and live as such with habits corresponding to those of the animals they represent. The Matako understand the language of the *yučandon* (aquatic bird) which warns them whenever an enemy has come to attack.

The *kiličuk* owl sleeps all day and gets up only at 8 o'clock in the evening. Then he goes to the river where he catches *wáhat* (*sabalo*). He is a very good fisherman and at midnight takes the first catch to his wife. She prepares a part of it to be eaten immediately and saves the rest for another meal. After giving his wife his first catch he returns to the pool and fishes until dawn, then he goes home to sleep.

The jaguar always talks with a medicine-man, assuring him that he is his friend. He has a soul the same as men. He calls the Matako *etekičalax* (black heads) and says that their flesh tastes good.

77. The Ray

One day while passing a lagoon a man heard a noise under the water. He dove into the water and saw people building a big house. The ray (*poxwin*) was the master carpenter and taught him how to make such a house. The ray had many houses, bright and furnished with everything. He had a

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store also with maté and many clothes. The Matako houses are in the form of a ray because they learned from the ray how to build them:

78. The Spider

In ancient times the spider was a woman who taught weaving to a Matako girl. When she knew how to weave, the Spider, who was still a woman, changed into an animal. The Matako learnt from the girl how to weave their ponchos and belts.

79. Why the Indians are Dark

A green frog (*hanatáx*) came out of the water to change its skin. It met an Indian and suggested that they exchange skins. The Indian was distrustful of the frog and would not accept his offer. Some other Indians came along and changed skins with the frog and they became white. Their skins were as white as the skin of a German and were so because they had trusted the frog. The first Indian and his friends were afraid to change their skins with the frog and so they have remained dark.

80. The Origin of the Otter

A boy went to take a bath in a river. He refused to get out of the water and go home. He was changed into an otter because he stayed in the water too long.

81. The Origin of the Ant-bear

An old woman was picking berries in the bush. She refused to go home and was changed into an ant-bear (*sulax*).

82. The Origin of the Jaguar

A man went fishing with his wife. He climbed a tree to catch parrots. He threw the parrots down to his wife who was on the ground. From the top of the tree he saw her

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eating the parrots he had thrown down. He said, »Why are you eating the parrots?» He climbed down the tree and went up to her but she broke his neck with her teeth. When she went back to her house her children rushed up to her to see what she was bringing home. She was carrying her husbands' head. The children said, »Why do you bring the head of our father?» She answered, »This is not the head of your father, it is an armadillo's head.» During the night she ate her children and then ran away, to the bush and did not come back. She changed herself into a jaguar. Jaguars are women.'

83. The Eel

A man passed a lagoon and saw a dog coming out of the water. It was a female dog whose teats were full of milk. The animal was very bad and the man, who was afraid, ran away. The dog caught him and bit him. The man was changed into an eel (*iʔñá*).

84. The Origin of Wild Pigs

Some women went to gather *caraguatá* to make bags. In the evening they did not return. The following morning the men went out to search for them. They found only wild pigs *nitsáx* into which the women had been changed.

85. The Larva of the Pini Bee

Formerly the larva of the *pini* wasp was a man. He was stout and fat and his nose was dark.

86. The Palometa Fish[1] (Pedro)

Once upon a time the palometa fish (*nixwúk*) was a man and he had a cow and a donkey. One day he decided to find the source of all water. He killed his cow, dried the flesh and loading the donkey with the dried meat went in

[1] Palometa (*Serrosalmo piranha*). Voracious fish.

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search of the source of water. After a while he arrived at a swampy place where he and his donkey sank into the mud and died. The man was changed into a palometa fish.

87. The Woman and the Dogs (Pedro)

Formerly there was a woman who lived by herself and went hunting with her dog as a companion. One day the people of her village noticed that she was pregnant and as she was not married they wondered if she had taken her dog as a husband. She gave birth to a dog. After a while she had another baby dog and people knew that the dog was her husband. Instead of killing her dogs she suckled and raised them as though they were real children. After they were grown their mother took them to hunt and showed them which animals to catch. The dogs could not speak but they understood perfectly what their mother said. She told them to leave the spotted animal, the tiger, alone. They must not approach the peccaries, nor the majal, (the two species of Dicotyles) for they were very dangerous. They could kill deer but if they happened to meet a puma they were not to follow him to the trees, but wait for the hunters. She also told them that when they followed an armadillo they had better not bite his nose or he would curl himself into a ball. Neither were they to attack the *aguara guasu* (Canis Azarae) nor the tapir. Care was necessary when attacking an ant-eater and a certain kind of coati. With the tiger-cats they were to take the same precautions as those taken with the puma and not follow it. It they should meet with a fox, who was very much like themselves they might fight him but if after a little while they found him to be stronger, they must grab him by the throat. They could kill with impunity all kinds of armadillos, turtles and a variety of small fox. They were to be cautious regarding deer. Females could be attacked but the males with horns were very dangerous. They were to be careful with the iguanas as

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their bites were dangerous to dogs. Snakes should not be attacked.

One day the woman sent her children hunting. They killed a tapir. When they returned they were hungry so their mother skinned the tapir and fed them the meat, as she took good care of them.

As her sons were excellent hunters a man came to the woman and asked her if she would let them accompany him on a hunt. The woman was very fond of her children and as she knew hunting was dangerous, she sent her nephew along with them. The nephew was old and experienced. Time passed and the dogs did not return. Finally one of them appeared and when the woman asked him where his brother was he did not answer, saying only »is, is, is.» (»All right»).

He told his mother that the jaguar had killed his brother for the fun of it, he had not eaten him. Some men killed the jaguar and gave the woman its flesh which she ate. She made a *pimpim* (drum) and she sang for two years. After two years she had ceased thinking of her son, but she always accompanied her dogs on the hunt for fear they would be killed.

88. The Woman and the Dogs (second version)

Once there was a woman and a dog and they used to go hunting together. The woman became pregnant and the people said that the dog had made her so. The people were thinking, »She is pregnant and she is not married. Only the dog with whom she goes around could have made her pregnant.» She gave birth to a dog. The second one was a dog and so was the third. Then the people said that it was true that she had intercourse with the big dog. The woman always spoke to the dogs, but they could not answer. When she spoke to them they could understand her. They say that when the dogs wanted to speak they said, »is, is, is, is». That was the language of the dogs. Whenever the woman

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told them to come and drink water they would do so. If the woman said, »Go and lie in the shade», the dogs went to lie in the shade. If she said, »Come and have some water», they came and drank. Whenever the woman would say, »Go with so and so,» they went with him, but when the woman said, »Let us go hunting», if they did not want to go they just lay where they were. If she said, »Let us go hunting,» they stood up, but one always stayed at home. Only two went to hunt.

The woman did not kill them, she gave them her breast and they slept there. She stretched on the ground and the pups sucked. When they were full she got up.

People always asked her for dogs which could hunt. The woman said. »My sons, if you do not want to go send one of your brothers to go with this man. If you come across a dangerous animal do not go near him and take care to retreat a little. The wild pigs are bad. You will recognize the jaguars by their spots, they are very bad. If you see an armadillo, be prudent, if you bite his shell it will pinch your nose. Do not be afraid of ostriches they are safe. If you hunt a wild boar (Spanish *chancho majal*) you must know that it is dangerous. Do not go near it. When you are after a jaguar, do not climb the tree that it is on, wait for people, for they will follow you and will come soon. When the people arrive they will kill the jaguar, it will fall, it will die.»

The people came back after having killed a jaguar. They gave the skin to the woman. She said, »It is fine. With this skin I will make a litter for my children.» The people also brought meat to her whenever they went hunting with the dogs. They distributed the flesh to her in order that the dogs might eat abundantly.

One day another man came. He said, »Aunt, I came here in order to see if you would lend me your dogs so I might go and hunt.» That evening the people came back. The woman said, »It looks as if my sons had hunted animals.

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they are full.» »My sons, here is water if you want to drink, drink and then go to sleep.»

Another man came and asked for the dogs. He took all three. That evening two dogs came back to their mother, one was missing. The mother said, »It looks as if something has happened to one of my sons, he did not come back with his brothers.» The people were arriving and one said to the mother, »The jaguar killed your son. The jaguar was in a thicket and it ran after the dog. The dog escaped but the bush was so high that he could not pass through and he was seized by the jaguar and killed.» People gathered before the woman's house and said, »Aunt, people are coming with the body of your son.» They buried the dog. The mother wept, »What a pity, I loved you so much.». The woman was always thinking of what had happened and she refused to give her other sons to anyone because the jaguar had eaten one. The mother would go with them to hunt and when they arrived at a place where there were no people she would give them advice. »When you pursue a dangerous animal don't bite it. The *coati* is bad, the ant-bear too. The fox is not so bad and the white armadillo and iguana are harmless. Take care of snakes, the *yarara*, of the coral, and the *kapitsil*. The rattlesnake is very dangerous. You must know a big fox with a black mouth. Take care of the tapirs; they will seize a dog by the neck and throw it to the ground. Be on your guard when you hunt a male deer, it has horns and can kill you. The male deer has a bad smell, but the female deer has no smell and that is good. If you run after little armadillo (*peludo* in Spanish) he will dig a hole in the ground. Wait until the people come and dig it out and kill it. Turtles are entirely harmless.»

89. The Woman and the Bird[1] (Pedro)

When birds were still men, they lived without women. One day they gathered to sing so that the women could pick

[1] See the tale *Tawkrwax* and the Birds., p. 34.

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as husbands the men who sang and beat drums the best. The *letseniwótáx* sang first and did so well that two women went to live with him. Each bird sang in turn and they sang well that each got a woman and some of them, the *letseniwotax* and the *sǫytín*, got two. When it was the *suxñay* turn to sing, the bird which sings so mournfully near graves, he sang such a horrible song that a woman who was menstruating filled her hand with blood and smeared on the bird's face. He went to the river to wash his head, but could not remove all the blood and he still has a bit of red around his beak.

90. The Pigeon and the Egret (Pedro)

The pigeon used to have a long beak like the egret. He lived close to the lagoons where he could get fish. One day the piegeon and the heron decided to go fishing together. The pigeon's horse was very fast while the heron's horse was slow. The pigeon made fun of his companion's horse so they decided to separate and see who could get to the lagoon first. The egret had been fishing for a long time when the pigeon arrived. The pigeon started fishing immediately and he was in such a hurry that he broke his beak on the first fish he caught. He did not know what to do. He went to the forest and repaired his beak with wild beans (*poroto del monte* in Spanish). Since that time he has not fished, but has lived in the forest eating fruits and insects.

91. The Humming-bird (Martin)

Once upon a time there were some people. A girl of these people married a young man from another village. The boy was very small and therefore the people would not be friendly with him, they hated and made fun of him and did not believe he was able to sow and fight like the others. The name of this little man was *Tuxtan* and he is said to have been a humming-bird.

Tuxtan and his wife lived in a little hut opposite the village. He had a dog and a tiny spear and one morning he said to his wife »I will go to hunt tapir.« He went with his dog to a lagoon where all the animals came to drink water. He saw a tapir, killed it and in the evening returned with it on his shoulders. The people saw him with the tapir and they took it away from him, not even leaving him a piece of meat. *Tuxtan* said, »What shall I do?« He went away from the village and cleared a field. He planted pumpkins, melons and all kinds of fruit. At harvest time he would gather his group and put it in a storehouse many miles from the village. In order to store his crop he would be absent from the village several days and when he returned he would bring just enough fruit for his wife. Some children playing in the village discovered near *Tuxtan's* house pumpkin and watermelon rinds. This they called to the attention of their parents. The villagers went in all directions to try and find his fields, they looked for six days and on the seventh they located his storehouse in the forest. They took everything in it, not even a seed was left. *Tuxtan* was again without food and he wondered what he was going to do.

He had a big family in his country and one day he took his spear and arrows and set out across the desert. He came to a lagoon. He remained there waiting for jaguars and ant-bears to come for water. When a jaguar came he killed it and he did the same with an ant-bear. In this way he killed five jaguars. With the skins of the jaguars and ant-bear he made himself some clothes.

He made many arrows and for each bunch of arrows he made a bow. One night he returned to his village to visit his wife. He found her asleep with another. He killed them both. The people knew where *Tuxtan* was living so they buried the woman and her lover and set out after *Tuxtan* to kill him. They found him near the lagoon but *Tuxtan* resisted them and killed all of them except for a chief and a few men. The chief said, »I will go and get more warriors.«

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Tuxtan answered, »I will go home, try to catch me.» The chief gathered all the warriors he could and then went back to attack *Tuxtan*.. One morning he heard the sound of trumpets and knew the warriors were coming. He said to his parents, »I have killed many people, you can escape with your goods, but I will stay here and rout these people, leave me alone.» His family ran away with the exception of his father and brother, they said, »If it is so, we will die with you.» The three destroyed the entire army leaving only the women (XVII).

92. The Chaja and the Charata (Pedro)

In olden times the *chaja* (crested screamer, Chauna torquata) and the *charata* (Ortales Canicollis) had different voices than those they have today. One day the *chaja* went to call on the *charata* and told him that his song was not fit for the forest and suggested that they exchange songs. The *charata* agreed and each went home with the song of the other. Since that time the songs of these birds have been different.

93. The Vulture and the Carancho (Pedro)

The vulture, *hato*, invited the *carancho* (hawk, Falco Rufus) to visit his fields. *Carancho* went with the the vulture but the *hato*'s fields were so hot that the *carancho* burnt himself and almost died. The *carancho* then invited the *hato* to look at his fields. The fields of the *carancho* were so cold that the *hato* barely escaped freezing to death.

94. The Deer and His Children (Pedro)

One day the deer went hunting, leaving his children at home. Before going he told them not to be afraid of the fire and not to run away if they should see it. He hunted for a long time and when he returned he brought some

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guayacan fruit to please his children, but he did not find them at home. They had not followed his advice and the fire had burned them.

95. The Jaguar and His Children (Pedro)

One day the jaguar decided to find out whether his children were cowards. He howled: »whoo, hou, hou.» Some of his children became afraid and some did not. He ate those who were frightened and spared those who were not.

96. The Puma and the Deer (Pedro)

One day the puma felt like eating a deer, but he was afraid since he did not know whether the deer had teeth. He decided to make the deer laugh so he turned around and showed his bottom, but the deer did not laugh. Then the puma showed his penis and the deer began to laugh. The puma saw that the deer had no teeth and so pursued and killed him. He ate one half of the deer immediately and hid the rest.

97. The Fighting Fish (Pedro)

All the fish were angry with *set*, a little fish which swims very fast. The *waxnoLe* fish lay in ambush at the spot where the river falls into the lagoon and opened wide his mouth. He expected the *set* to go into his mouth but the *set*, who is a courageous fish, managed to dodge him and the river water filled the stomach of the *waxnoLe*, which is the reason for this fish having a swollen stomach.

The *surubi* (*alák*) decided to attack the *wahát* (*sabalo*). The *surubi* warriors were more than two hundred strong and they were mounted on horses. They wore leather coats while they lay in ambush awaiting the *sabalo* who were coming down the river. The *sabalo* were not afraid because they were excellent swimmers. In fact the *sabalo* swam by so quickly that the *surubi* could not catch them and further-

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more the *sabalo* struck the *surubi* on their heads and made them one-eyed.

The *katukwetax* (yellow fish) and the *asak* fish, enraged by the misfortune of their friends, the *surubi* fish, decided to avenge them. Although the *atsa* had horses they could not kill the *sabalo*, who jumped from one side of the river to the other. *Sęt* and *sip* also tried to destroy the *sabalo* but even with their weapons, guns, swords, revolvers, they were as unsuccessful as the others.

The yiwis-fish (Spanish *vieja*) is the doctor of all the fish. If a fish is wounded *yiwis* sucks its wounds and sings like a medicine-man. In this way he manages to get the arrow point out of the wounded fish and the fish recovers. He cures all the fish just as the Matako medicine-men cure people.

One day some men heard a loud noise, like the trampling of a herd. One man went to investigate and he saw a score of donkeys loaded with ashes which were being taken to the *yiwis*. Ashes are the favorite food of this fish.

98. The Quarrel of the Fish (Pedro)

One day *WetyamLi*,[1] who was walking through the forest, heard two fish insulting each other. He went closer and saw the *tsonatáx* and the *ḳalę́* quarreling. The *tsonatáx* told the *ḳalę́* that he was ugly and the latter told the *tsonatáx* was even more ugly.

The *WetyamLi* again started walking and heard two other people fighting. This time it was the *kantax* who was telling the *xwolít* that he was bad looking and the former replied that the *xwolít* was still uglier.

Further on *WetyamLi* came upon two other people fighting, they were the *natsax* and the *silǫ́t*. The *natsax* told the

[1] I was unable to obtain any information about this character. The word *wetyamLi* means a «liar», a man who tells fish stories. It is possible that our *WetyamLi* is a sort of baron Munchhausen of the Matako folklore. See tale p. 74.

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silǫt he was homely and the *silǫt* replied that the *natsax* was even uglier because of his big mouth. *Natsak* in turn said that although his mouth was big, he was not as ugly as the *silǫt* whose mouth was too little.

Further on *WetyamLi* heard the *tsoktax* tell the *etékak* that he was very ugly because his head was flat and the *etékak* replied that he could not be as ugly as the *tsoktax* with his too big fins.

Still further on *WetyamLi* heard two more species of *palometa*[1] quarreling. The *nisčutax* was calling the *timętes* very ugly because his nose was so long and the latter replied that even if his nose was long the eyes of the *nisčútax* were too deeply set in their sockets and his mouth was always open, as if he could not shut it.

99. The War between the Donkeys and the Jaguars (Pedro)

In ancient times the donkey was a man and had a field. Once he sent his son to look at his field and when on the second day his son had not returned he began to wonder if the jaguar had eaten him. He went to the field and found the footprints of a jaguar who had carried his son off. He followed the trail of the jaguar, found him and punished him severely, for the donkey is stronger than the jaguar. The jaguar went home very ill from the kicks he had received. He decided to avenge himself so he organized an army to fight the donkey. In the army were all kinds of animals, the wild pigs, tapirs, foxes and *aguaras*. The donkey also raised an army. His army consisted of donkeys and insects. The jaguar's army stopped at one edge of a glade and the donkey's army stopped at the other side of the glade. The army of the jaguar began to fight and the insects rushed forward and entered the ears, eyes and mouths of the jaguar's army and they fled, greatly frightend. Hence the jaguars' noses are swollen.

[1] Palometa or piranha (*Serrosalmo sp.*).

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100. The Fight of the Serpents (Pedro)

One day the *kapitsil*, (a big and very poisonous serpent) decided to fight against the ratte-snake. He said he would surely win because he was much the stronger. The rattlesnake realized it would be difficult for him to win because of the size of the *kapitsil*, but he accepted the challenge. They had a terrible fight and at last they killed each other. Their bodies lay on the ground where they had fallen, swollen and rotten.

101. The Dog and the Fox (Pedro)

Formerly the dog was as wild as the fox, who was his friend. One day the dog came close to a village. The people thought he was nice looking and gave him some food. The dog went back and told his friend the fox that he should go with him to the village and stay there where there was plenty of food. The fox did not agree and advised the dog that there would come a day when he would be severely beaten for stealing food. The dog did not pay any attention to the wise advice of his friend and went to live with the people while the fox remained in the bush. One day the fox approached the village and heard the dog crying. He wanted to know what the trouble was and the dog told him that he had stolen some fish and the villagers had beaten him. The fox then reminded him of the advice wherein he had told him what his fate would be.

102. The Ants and the Old Woman (Martin)

Once upon a time there was an old woman. She had two storehouses filled with algarroba pods. The ants heard about it and went to eat her provisions. The women sold one storehouse to the ants. After they had bought it the ants beat a drum during the entire night and at dawn they left the storehouse closed. It was locked for a year and everybody was jealous of the old woman because she refused to give

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away her pods. At the end of the year the old woman opened her storehouse and said, «If the ants don't come to take away their algarroba, I will use it.» When she opened the door nothing was left but the husks, the ants had already eaten everything.

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103. The Jaguar and the Armadillo (Pedro)

One day the jaguar ate the armadillo's children. To avenge himself the armadillo went to the jaguar and told him that he had a stomach ache from eating too many earth worms, and that he wanted to be cured. He opened his armor and the jaguar sucked his stomach in order to take the disease out. The armadillo let the jaguar put his head on his stomach, but the third time he closed his armor and the jaguar's head was caught. The jaguar was choking and tried to break the armadillo's hold by slinging him against a tree but he was held tight. The jaguar died of suffocation. The armadillo then went to an old woman, who cured the wounds made by the jaguar.

104. The Jaguar and the Aguara (Pedro)

Once upon a time the jaguar invited the *aguara* (Canis Azarae) to have a fight with him. He made fun of the *aguara* and pretended he had no strength. The *aguara* accepted the challenge and they fought. The *aguara* managed to have the sun blind the jaguar and taking advantage of this he killed him.

105. The Jaguar and the Alligator

The jaguar challenged the alligator. The latter accepted and, acting as if he were afraid, withdrew slowly. The jaguar, sure that he would be the winner, insulted the *yacaré* and followed him. The alligator entered the lagoon and in his excitement over the fight the jaguar also went into the water. In the middle of the lagoon the alligator began to

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fight and he killed the jaguar by striking him on the head with his tail and biting him on the neck. He let the jaguar rot in the middle of the lagoon.

106. The Dog's Beer (Pedro)

The dog gathered all the filth he could find, put it in a hollow *palo borracho* and made it into beer. When the beverage was ready he invited everyone to come and drink it. Birds and mammals hastened there and drank as much as they could. The animals unused to filth were disgusted and vomited, but the others, used to carrion and dirt, remained and got drunk, danced and sang while the dog beat his drum. (XVIII).

107. The Owl's Beer (Pedro)

The owl (*holit*) made some beer in a little trough and invited everyone in to share it with him. All came, but each carried an axe in case the beer did not hold out. When they arrived and saw the small container they burst into laughter and said that the little vessel would never contain sufficient beer to make them all drunk. The owl said that they should drink without worrying. Whenever the vessel was empty the owl looked at the interior and the vessel would fill again. The owl did this twenty times, until all his guests were drunk. When they left they were so intoxicated that they could not find their axes and furthermore they lost their hats and girdles.

108. WetyamLi[1] and the Deer (Pedro)

One day *WetyamLi* was in the bush. He saw a bee. He threw his stick at it in order to kill it, but he missed and the stick fell to the ground with a loud noise. He went to see what the trouble was and found that instead of killing a bee he had killed a deer. He skinned it, prepared the

[1] See p. 70

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meat and ate it. Then he continued on his way. While he rode his horse's rear foot slipped into a hole full of honey; he removed his horse's hoof and sucked it. Then he went on his way. A little further on he saw a *lachiwana*-bee. Without saying a word he killed it and ate the honey. He ate so much honey he started to choke, so he ran to a pool and drank some water to get the honey down. When he felt better he remounted and attempted to follow a deer. But in the pursuit his horse's testicles rolled themselves around a *palo santo* and broke the the tree down. The tree in falling crushed the horse.

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109. WetyamLi, the Ostrich and the Armadillo (Pedro)

One day as *WetyamLi* was hunting in the bush the strings of his sandals came loose and one of them killed an *ostrich*. *WetyamLi* roasted him and ate him before going further. A little later he heard someone coughing and as he approached the place from which the sound came he saw it was an armadillo. *WetyamLi* was going to kill him but the armadillo begged him to spare his life, explaining that he had almost choked on »mestizo» honey and asked him for something to drink. After the armadillo had drunk the water given him by *WetyamLi* he asked for a bag in which to put honey. He filled the bag with honey and gave it to *WetyamLi*.

WetyamLi went hunting with his dogs and they scented something. He found a little iguana trying to put a big slice of honey into her *sandia del monte* bag. She could not get the honey in because the bag was too small. The dogs followed the little iguana intending to kill her but she begged them to kill her father who was already full grown.

110. The Jaguar and the Tiger-cat (Martin)

The jaguar could not hunt. One day he met a tiger-cat. The tiger-cat said to the jaguar, »Grandfather, why are you

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lean? You use only one paw while hunting, don't you?» The jaguar answered, »I cannot hunt because I use only one paw.» The tiger-cat said, »I will teach you how to catch a bird or an animal with two paws.» Then the tiger-cat went out and caught a bird with both paws. He said, »You must hunt this way.» The jaguar went out and killed a cow, using both his paws. With the help of the wild cat the jaguar learned to hunt.

111. The Fox and the Jaguar (Pedro)

The jaguar is the master of all animals. He appointed the fox to dry meat for him, but he paid his servant very little and he was stingy about the meat he gave the fox. One day, while the jaguar was enjoying his siesta, the fox, who was obliged to keep the flies away from the jaguar, decided to avenge himself. He caught all the flies he could and put them in a bladder full of air. He tied it to the jaguar's tail. The jaguar had dogs who hunted by themselves and signaled to him the presence of game. The jaguar mistook the buzzing of the flies in the bladder for the barking of his dogs which he thought had found some animal. He woke up with a start and said, »It seems my dogs are hunting». He went to fetch his club and ran in the direction from which the noise seemed to come. When he had gone a short distance he heard the same buzzing in another direction and he turned back to the place he had just left, but then he heard the same noise near the spot he had just left. He ran there, but changed his course a few minutes later. He did the same thing four of five times until it occured to him to look at his tail. He understood the trick the fox had played on him and in great anger went home to punish him. In the meantime the fox had fled, taking with him all the jaguar's dried meat.

The jaguar followed his trail. He met a fox but he did not know whether it was the one he was seeking or another. He asked, »Did you steal my meat?» »No, it was my

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father-in-law.» To discover whether the fox was lying the jaguar asked him to defecate and he looked at the excrement. He found only bits of crab meat. The jaguar went away and left the fox in peace. 539x 773x 825

The jaguar went on a long journey and during his absence he entrusted his wife to the fox. As soon as the jaguar left the fox slept with his wife. Upon the jaguars return he smelt the vulva of his wife and noticed the odor of fox. The jaguar beat his wife and then went in pursuit of the fox, but could not find him.

112. The Jaguar and the Fox (Martin)

There was a jaguar living with his female. A fox called on him and said, »I want to be your companion.» Every day the fox and jaguar went hunting together. The fox called the jaguar »uncle». One day the fox said, »Uncle, I cannot go with you today.» »Well, stay here with your aunt.» The fox remained with the female jaguar. He slept with her and when the jaguar came back he found the fox with his wife. He ran forward to kill him, but the fox fled. The jaguar went after him and at last caught him by a hind leg. The fox mentioned that he had a thorn in his paw and asked the jaguar to lend him his knife. The jaguar handed him the knife, but the fox threw it away. As the jaguar went to pick it up the fox escaped. He concealed himself in a cave. The jaguar picked up a stone and painted it the color of himself and then put it at the entrance to the cave. Each time the fox saw the rock he decided not go out until he was so thirsty and hungry he could stand it no longer. »I will go out even if the jaguar eats me,» said the fox. He went and touched the stone and said, »The jaguar has fooled me.»

113. The Tiger-cat and the Rat

One day while the tiger-cat was hunting he found a rat which he intended to kill but the rat crept into a hole in the ground where the tiger-cat could not catch him. To induce

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him to come out the tiger-cat invited the rat to play with him. The rat said that he would never do that because he knew what the tiger's intentions were. The tiger-cat insisted and insisted, but the rat firmly refused to leave his hole. The tiger-cat threatened to call his friend the owl (*čiličuk*) and have him bring the rat out but the rat said that he would call his good friend the vulture to lift the owl high in the air and drop him on the ground. The tiger-cat was afraid and ran away. The rat then left his hiding place.

114. The Fight between the Fishhook and the Net (Pedro)

X 539
X 773

One day the fishhook and the net quarreled. The net said that the fishhook was useless because he could not catch more than one fish at a time, while he, the net, could take many fish at once. The fishhook replied that it was true that the net was able to take many fish at one time, but if a piranha-fish happened to be caught in the net he could cut the threads, let all the fish escape, and make the owner very angry. The hook never let his prey go. The net answered that the fishhook was right, but that it was not exceptional for a *palometa* fish to cut the line from a hook and then the hook would be lost.

115. The Fight between the Earthen Pot and the Iron Pot (Pedro)

The iron pot reproached the earthen pot for not cooking the food fast enough. The earthen pot answered that it was easier to lift to put under the fire and after all he also cooked the food. The two pots fought and naturally the iron pot won.

116. The Fight between the Earthen Pot and the Calabash (Pedro)

The earthen pot once reproached the calabash for not being useful. The earthen said, »When they put you in the water you don't sink, but I sink even if the water is frozen.»

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H. TALES OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN OR WITH PREDOMINANT EUROPEAN ELEMENTS

117. The Magic Flight (Pedro)

A Matako had a very pretty daugther who was loved by a man. The girl's father said, »I will give you my daughter if by noon you dig a well deep enough for me to get water from.» At noon the girl took her lover some food and found that he had only dug a hole six feet deep. The girl said, »I love you, I will help you and then we can marry.» She blew and the earth cracked open and the man drew water out of the well. The girl returned to her father and he asked, »Has he drawn water from the well?» »Yes.» »You may marry him, he is a good worker.»

The girl's father then ordered the man to build a corral and to have it finished by noon. At the time the woman went to give him his food she saw that he had only put up poles for a distance of 300 feet. She said, »I love you, I will help you so you can finish your work quickly.» She blew and her breath felled trees and broke off branches which went over and stuck themselves upright in the ground. The fence was completed right away. The father wanted to give him another task. The woman said to her husband, »I cannot help you, we must flee otherwise my father will kill you.» Before they left the girl made a heap of saliva and left it in her hut. During the night the father, who was distrustful, kept calling his daughter to see if she was in her hut. The saliva answered him each time he called but as the night wore on the voice became weak and in the morning the words could hardly be heard for the saliva had dried up. The father was aware of the trick his daugther had played on him and he started to pursue her. When the daughter heard her father following them she changed her husband into a *yuchan*[1] and herself into a log lying across the road. The couple fled farther and as the father drew

[1] Bombaceae, see note 1 p. 18.

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177 near again the girl threw her comb and it became a forest.
x 539 In order to escape her angry father who followed her every-
x 773 where she changed herself first into a *tartago* (Ricinus) and then into a hawk (*carancho*). At last she changed herself into a river so wide that her father could not cross over to the other side.

[Another version of this tale tells how the girl became pregnant and gave birth the same day. When the father opened the door of his daugther's hut he found in it a child who was his grandson.]

118. Opa (Pedro)

Opa had a brother who forced him to gather the corn in his field. There were many stalks of corn and the work was to be finished before midnight. Opa did his best but he knew that he could never finish the work in time. The ants came to help him and they gathered all the corn. When the brother came to see how the work was progressing he found that the work had been completed.

The same brother ordered Opa to drink all the water in a certain pool Opa drank as much as he could but the pool was not dry. He heard the voice of *Katęla*, mother-in-law of the water. She said, »You could never drink all that water, but I will help you.» She drank and the pool dried up at once. The brother of Opa was very pleased.

Opa caught many fish with a hook. His brother was also lucky. They set out again and the brother said to Opa, »We shall eat our fish, but let us begin with yours.» Opa agreed. His brother ate all the fish but when Opa wanted to have his brother's fish he was refused. Opa was left with nothing to eat. He went back to the pool and fished again. He caught even more fish than he had the first time. His brother came and asked him for some fish as he was very hungry. Opa would not give him any because his brother was stingy and bad.

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119. The Boy Who Killed the Rainbow (Pedro)

A boy was ordered to look after his grandmother's sheep. One day a man who was passing by offered to trade him a dog for a sheep. At first the boy was not willing for he was afraid his grandmother would beat him, but the man assured him the dog would fight for him because instead of nails in his paws there were knives. The boy went home, leaving the dog outside after having ordered him to run to his side if he called to him. He went inside the house and his grandmother began to beat him. He called his dog and the dog rushed into the house with such force that the door was flung against the woman and she fell down. As she was getting up the old woman said she believed he had exchanged a sheep for the dog and she caught the dog and tied him up. Then the old woman ordered the boy to climb a tree and when he was up the tree she let her husband's wild pigs loose. When the wild pigs began to root up the tree the boy called to his dog, who cut his leash and killed the wild pigs. The old woman, angry at the death of her husband's wild pigs, sent the boy to his sister who was married to a rainbow. Before arriving at his sisters the boy hold his dog to come as soon as he called. He arrived at the womans' house and told her that his grandmother had beaten him for having given a sheep to a hungry traveler. He was careful not to tell her that he had exchanged the sheep for a dog. He asked her for a sheep to replace the one he had given away. She told him that he had done wrong by coming to her for her husband, the rainbow, would eat him when he returned. She advised him to run away before the return of her husband, but he did not follow her advice. When her husband was coming home she hid the boy behind same hides. The rainbow smelled the odor of man and asked his wife who was there. She said there was nobody there and that he was just smelling *charqui*.[1] Not satisfied with her answer the

[1] Dry meat.

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177 rainbow looked everywhere, found nothing and went to
X 539 sleep. The boy left his hiding place, sharpened his knife
X 773 and cut the rainbow's throat, but the rainbow awoke and swallowed the boy just after he had called his dog. The dog rushed in and grabbing the rainbow by the back tore his belly open. The boy got out and cut the body of the rainbow into pieces and threw them away. The woman said that since he had killed her husband, she was going to marry him and that she would see if he would give her human dry meat. The boy told her that he was not as bad as the rainbow and that he would kill many animals.

120. The Boy Who Killed the Rainbow (second version) (Martin)

Once there was an old woman who owned many sheep. She had no one to take care of her flocks and she wanted a herder. One day in going to get some wood she discovered a child in a lonely place. She took him in and fed him. She did not know who the child belonged to but she was satisfied because it was a boy. She thought, »He will grow up and be my servant.» The child grew up and began to tend herd. One day he met two devils and he struck a bargain with them. They gave him two dogs in exchange for some sheep. The boy knew the sheep were not his, but the devils insisted so much that he was obliged to agree. He went back to his house and the old woman counted the sheep. She saw that some where missing. She said, »Where are the missing sheep?» He answered, »I met two men and I was so afraid they might kill me I traded some sheep for two dogs.» The boy was left with the dogs. The following day the old woman made herself sick and said to the child, »Go and get me some herbs, don't take the dogs with you but leave them here.» The dogs were kept in the house tied with thick chains. They were lying very quietly together paying attention to each noise. The boy set out and found a tree with some flowers. These flowers were the herbs the old

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woman wanted. The herbs were defended by some wild boars that arrived with thunder and wind. The child seeing them shouted. The dogs heard him and broke their chains, which fell off, and ran to help their master. They charged the wild boars, routed and killed them. The child picked the flowers and took them to his mother.

The following day he set out on a journey with the two dogs. At sunset he found a house and stayed there. The people there told him to avoid taking a certain road where there was a man who ate people. The child said, »I will kill that man.» He arrived where the man was. This man was the *lewo* (rainbow). There the boy met his sister. »How are you, my sister?» She replied, »I am a prisoner of that man. Why did you come here? That man will eat you.» »No, I will kill him first.» He went out of the house. The man reached him. He had thunder and lightning with him and rain. The child tied a pair of scissors to the neck of each dog. The monster swallowed the dogs and they passed from one side to the other in his stomach, badly tearing his internal organs. The monster was like a whale and he tried to drown them by spewing water everywhere, but the dogs shook the water off.

121. The Children and the Jaguar (Martin)

Once there were a man and a woman who lived in a village. They were upset by their two children, a boy and a girl, because they never allowed them to make any pots. The man took them to the forest. He found there a honey comb in a tree. He dug it out. When he got the honey out of the tree he said to the children, »Stay here and enjoy this honey, I will go and get some more. As soon as I find it I will call you.» The children remained there and ate the honey. At sunset the boy said, »Our father is certainly lost, that is why he has not called us.» They began to shout and cry and look for him, but their father did not answer for he had

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177 gone home. Late in the evening they discovered a stone
X 539 house in the middle of a glade. On the top of the house was
X 773 a chair and leading up to the chair were some stairs. The children sat on top of the house and waited. About eight o'clock they heard the roaring of jaguars. The girl said to her brother, »What is it?» The boy answered, »Do not be afraid, you hear the drum of our father, tomorrow we will go home.»

When the jaguar arrived, the girl cried. The boy threw at it with his sling and almost killed the jaguar. The jaguar said »My children, don't be afraid, I have come to save you.» They went down and dressed the jaguar's wound, which was full of worms. The jaguar recovered. The following day the jaguar brought them a cow which they butchered. As they were eating the meat another jaguar happened to pass by. He said to the first jaguar, »Why are you keeping these children, you feed them although you know their parents hate us.» »They are my children, said the jaguar, they came to see me. If you are intending to slaughter them, you must start with me.» The jaguars fought over the children. The boy helped his friend and together they killed the other jaguar. The jaguar took the children with him so that they might learn something about the world. The children were already grown up. They set out for a village 50 miles away. Halfway there they found a huge serpent blocking the road. The people they met on their way said to them, »Don't go there the serpent will eat you.» But the jaguar and the children answered, »We shall go and if we meet the serpent, well, we shall kill it.» The people treated the three voyagers with kindness. Before reaching the serpent there was a house where they lodged. The woman, who owned the house, told them, »The serpent will eat you.» The boy replied, »If you see crows flying there you will know we are dead, but if you don't see them it will be a sign that we are on the other side.»

They found the serpent sleeping. The jaguar seized it by the neck and the boy cut it into pieces with a cutlass. They

butchered the serpent. They were already in the new country. They arrived at a little house. The owner said, »How could you come, the serpent kills everybody?» Well, we have killed the serpent.» The man notified the village, »A man has finished the serpent.» The people would not believe it. A chief gathered the people and said, »Let us go and see what the trouble is.» The chief went away with his party. He found the dead serpent. He cut off its tail and its head but the child had cut out its tongue long before and had kept it.

The chief went back and presented the head and tail to the great chief saying, »I have killed the serpent.» The great chief called the boy and asked him if it was true that he had slaughtered the serpent. The boy said, »It is true, here you have the tongue.» The chief was very angry having the great chief treat him as a liar. The chief lay in ambush for the boy. He was going to kill him. Early in the morning he went to catch him. The boy had only his knife but with it he killed all his enemies. He remained in the village and the jaguar came back.

122. The Boy Who Killed the Wicked Men (Martin)

There was an old man who had a daughter. The daughter had lost her husband and she remained a widow with two children. (XIX). The old man, who was one-eyed, told the children that they should not eat fish. They had always obeyed him. They set out and found a ~~pool~~ full of fish and one of the children said, »Even though our grandfather forbids us to eat fish because he is one-eyed, we will eat some.» When they returned to their home that evening they said, »Mother, we ate fish today.» The old man heard them and said, »So you have eaten fish today?» He got up and chased them with a cudgel to beat them for having disobeyed him. The boys went to a village where there were houses. The owners were giants who blocked the way and ate people.

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The boy[1] stayed there and the giants allowed him to rest. At sunset the giants fell asleep. The boy was awake and thinking how he could escape. While the people were asleep he got out and went on his journey. He arrived at the world's end, at the seashore. Before he arrived there he met a widow. The widow received him very kindly and gave him food. She told him how he could cross the sea. He arrived at the sea and an alligator came near. He said, »I want to go to the other side.» The animal said, »Get on me.» He got on the alligator and he landed on the other side. There he found a village with very nice people. He remained with them. The chief of the people liked the boy very much. He stayed there one year. Sometimes the village would disappear and sometimed it would come back. One day the boy said to the chief, »Father, I want to go back.» The man said, »All right, I shall give you a stick which will be useful to you on many occasions.» He gave him the stick and the boy returned, crossing the sea on the back of the alligator. He set out and arrived at the place of the widow. He said to her, »I will kill the bad people who killed your husbands.» The widow was greatly pleased and she gave him much food so that he could go on with his journey. He arrived where the wicked men were. They said, »Here is the man who escaped us, we shall eat him.» The boy said, »All right, here I am, do what you will with me.» The bad men came and he knocked them down with his stick.

There was peace in the world and everybody was happy for he had killed the wicked people. The boy set out and arrived in his country. His mother was very happy and he killed his grandfather who had made him leave home.

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[1] The informant forgot about the second son and in the continuation of his story speaks of one only.

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123. The Child and the Friendly Animals

There were three fishermen and their mother, who was a very old woman. They fisherman set out on a journey. The first day they held a meeting and they decided that they would eat first the provisions of their younger brother and later the food of the two others. They did as they planned. When they had finished they had not done as they, but each of the elder brothers ate his provisions without giving a bit to their younger brother. The poor boy was obliged to live on the little that was left. On their way they met some ants who were trying to eat a piece of bread. The elder brothers said to the younger one, »Eat that piece of bread.» The boy said, »Poor animals they are not like us, they have no hands. I will crumble this piece of bread so that they can eat.» He crumbled it and the ants ate. Farther on they met a falcon with a pigeon. The brothers said, »Take that pigeon from the falcon.» But the boy replied, »I will cut up this pigeon in order that the falcon can eat it more easily, the poor bird has no knife.» He gave the falcon the meat chopped up in small pieces. The falcon said, »Thank you, if you need me, I will help you.» Still farther on they met a jaguar and a puma and a prairie wolf (*aguara*). They had killed a cow and they were trying to quarter it. The brothers said, »If you are hungry you can take meat from this cow that the animals have slain.» The boy said, »They have no knife, I will help them quarter the cow. Each shall receive his share.» He did as he had said. The tiger said, »Son, if ever you get into any trouble and cannot get out of it, call us, we will be there.»

In the evening they arrived at the house of a man. This man had large fields sown with rice. He spoke to the brothers and asked them if they could help him harvest his crop for a distance of four miles. The two elder brothers pointed to the younger one and said, »He knows how to do it in a moment.» The boy did not know what to do. The owner

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of the field was a devil. He said to the child, »I will wait until you succeed,» and he went to his house to take a nap. The boy set out and on his way met an old woman. She spoke to him, »Why are you so sad? Why are you crying?» »It is the fault of my brothers who abuse and harm me every day.» The old woman said, »Don't you remember the animals you helped? They are waiting for you.» The boy realised that it was true. He went away and met a big ant. The ant said, »If you have some bread, put a piece at each corner.» He did so. In the night a party of ants gathered around the field and harvested it. At dawn the rice was stored up and you could see piles of it very clean without straw. They boy removed the rice. The devil was satisfied. That same day he went to the brothers and said, »Which of you can rescue my daughter who is in the power of another devil?» The brothers pointed to their younger brother. »He can do that.» The younger one set out in search of the woman. Before he arrived he met the puma, jaguar, and the prairie wolf (*aguara*) and also the falcon and the ants. The tiger gave him some good advice. The falcon spoke, »You change into a falcon.» The boy changed himself into a falcon. He found the stolen woman sitting with her husband in the lobby of house. The man was so bad that he would kill everything that came near his house. The man stood up and seized his bow and arrow to kill the falcon, but the girl said, »Don't kill him, he is tame, I will give him some food.» The man did not kill him. The bird went out. He held another meeting with his friends, the animals. »How can I kill this man? The father of the girl told me that he cannot be slain even if he is cut into pieces.» The jaguar said, »You must find out how many lives this giant has and in what way he can be put to death. Go and ask the girl. She will ask the man and when the girl finds out you will certainly hear about it.» The boy again changed himself into a falcon and went to see the girl. He chose a moment when she was alone and said, »I am a man sent by your

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father. I wish to have you ask that man how he is going to die, how he can be killed.» It was time for dinner. They were eating. Before they had finished the girl spoke, »Why don't you die when they kill you? If you really love me you will tell me where your life is and what your death is.» The devil said, »Why should I not love you, I love you very much. At last he said, »I have my life in a lagoon. My first life is a bull, in the bull is a cactus, in the cactus is a pigeon, in the pigeon an egg and in the egg my life. That is the last one. The man who kills these three animals and brings the egg and strikes me on the forehead will end my lives.» They finished their meal at the siesta time. The falcon went out again. The boy returned to his fellow animals and told them what he had heard. They discussed the matter and went to see where the bull was. They found him sleeping under an algarroba tree. The jaguar and the puma hunted the bull and killed it. They cut it and opened its stomach. The cactus jumped out and ran to a pool. They caught it and cut off its head. They opened it. The pigeon flew out, but before it reached the lagoon the falcon captured it and brought it back. They opened its stomach and took an egg out. The boy set out this time in the guise of a boy. When he arrived at the devil's house the devil was dying. He struck him on the head with the egg and his life ended. They took the woman to give her back to her father. He was very pleased to see her again. The devil said to the young man, »If you wish you may marry my daughter.» But the boy thought, »If I marry the daughter of this devil, perhaps he will kill me, I had better go». He said to the devil, »My brothers can get water out of this stone.» The devil ordered them to get water out of the stone. They could not and the devil killed them and ate them. The boy went back to his mother.

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NOTES

I. The Spirits of the Dead

1) *Husek* (*o-husek* or *no-husek* = my soul) is the «god» we have inside of us when we are living. This spirit goes away when we dream. It does not reside in any particular organ but is everywhere in our body. It is through the *husek* that we know what is going to happen. When we die the *husek* becomes an *āhat*, when the *āhat* dies it becomes a bird called *xwitson*. The *xwitson* becomes an *katak* fly and the fly a *ḳipḳip* bird, the *ḳipḳip* becomes a spider (*xwistę́*) and the *xwistę́* becomes a bat (*asus*) and then disappears.

2) The love spirit is called *soitayax*. She is beautiful, all adorned with necklaces and bracelets, exactly like a woman falling in love. She is very fond of men and it is she who commands women to love. When a woman leaves her husband and goes to another man, it is because her soul has tired of the first husband. In the same way a man takes another wife, his soul craves a change.

3) Now and then the *āhat* comes back shortly after death. In such cases, he is very bad. His eyes are yellow. If an *āhat* comes back he goes directly to the house where women are alone, generally the women become frightened and run away. The *āhat* like to sleep with women. They tell them that they are going to bathe and that they will come back very clean and good-looking.[1]

4) At times the spirit comes back to visit his grave, but this only occurs a few days after death, before he has had time to go to his family house in the underworld.

5) The soul goes to the abode of the dead riding a beautiful horse, well-saddled and carrying all that is necessary for the trip. The soul also drives in a car, from one village to another and wanders everywhere. On his way to the land

[1] It is said that the *āhat* are dirty, but my informant was not of that opinion. He told me that all the *āhat* he had seen were clean and beautiful.

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of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house. 775

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region. [772]

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death. [787]

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire. [761]

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms. [821]

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see. 756 773

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To pass through this darkness the medicine-man changes into a species of owl (*sinalčǫ*). This is a bird who travels by night and whose eyes are like lanterns. In this disguise he is able to fly in the dark. After crossing the dark area he changes himself into a (white aquatic bird with red-circled eyes. When he arrives at the Big Fire's house he changes himself into a *carancho* and in this last disguise he calls on the Big Fire. They get acquainted and are very friendly. Later the *carancho* changes himself into a beautiful and well dressed woman. Big Fire is on good terms with the beautiful woman. Soon she becomes a man again. Big Fire asks the medicine-man if there is much bush in his country. The medicine-man takes care not to mention straw, bushes or trees, otherwise Big Fire will eat them up. The medicine-man goes home.

III. The Medicine-men

A man who wants to become a medicine-man must eat raw dog flesh. Ordinarily the candidate slays a young pup eats its flesh, and buries its head and skin very carefully.

Medicine dances are taught the prospective medicine-men by demons or spirits who give them their power. The *welán* are the spirits who are the most inclined to instruct men in the art of magic. The ordinary method in this procedure is as follows: The soul of a man is ravished by a *welán* and shut into a tree. There the man's soul remains captive and the *welán* teaches it the language of the spirit, then the *welán* blows on the prospective medicine-man and he thus acquires the power to treat sick people who come to him, using the same method. Medicine-men are constantly in touch with the spirits. They meet them at night and talk with them. The spirits have a stick called *laḳaaLoi* which contains their souls and this they give to their friends, the medicine-men.

Some women may acquire medical knowledge, but the Indians never consider them as smart as male doctors.

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Young men seen dancing while an old medicine-man is performing a treatment are practicing the fundamentals of the art before becoming full fledged doctors. Not all succeed for the trials laid on the medicine-man's soul during the journey to the spirits are hard and many give up.

When a medicine-man performs his ceremonies, or as the natives say *»dice misa»*, he changes himself into a white bird called *yulo* in Spanish. The medicine-man is said to transform himself into a bird, but when asked how such a change occurs without the body of the magician undergoing a change, the natives explained that only the soul of the man becomes a bird. In order to send his soul abroad in the shape of a bird the medicine-man plays for a long time on a flute made of the bone of a *yulo* bird. By so doing he creates an intimate contact between himself and the bird, but the real transformation occurs only after he has snuffed a powder called *hatax*. This intoxicating powder is prepared from the seeds of the *sebil* (*hatek*), a very common tree which grows abundantly in the Chaco and in the north of Argentina. The seeds are gathered, parched and pounded in a wooden mortar. The powder is exposed to the air a long time and then put in a calabash that has been used by medicine-men during their ceremonies. When the medicine-man has changed himself or his soul into a bird he goes into the sky »like an airplane» and calls on Rain to make him fall. To meet Rain he must enter his house through a very narrow door.

Just before sowing time the medicine-men go up into the sky to get rain. Without their aid the crop would dry up. Thus at the village Km. 600, all the cattle would have died had it not been for the Matako medicine-men who helped the white men by calling on the rain.

Old people say that once there was a heavy rain and some children became frightened and the Rain took them up into the heavens. A medicine-man in the form of a bird went up to bring them back.

The medicine-men who have snuffed the powder of *sebil* seeds (*hatax*) and gone into a trance see everything, especially the disease demons. They also see bad medicine-men. When in this state they may also call on the spirits of the dead (*āhat*). Such visits to the dead may sometimes help to cure a patient, for if it is the spirit of a dead person who caused the sickness, he can also take it away. A medicine-man has to pay the disease demon when he cures somebody and so he in turn charges the patient. The fees of a medicine-man are extremely high. My informant Pedro, for instance, has paid a poncho (value of 18 pesos) for being cured of snake bite. If the patient dies, the medicine-man is not entitled to a fee, even a very small one. However, his professional fame is not lessened.

If a medicine-man has not succeeded in effecting a cure, another one is called in, but then the task is more difficult as the disease has lost its temper. It is also important to call the right specialist. Certain doctors have acquired fame for curing particular diseases. Snake bites are usually treated by special medicine-men.

When medicine-men perform magical rites, a very big tree covered with green leaves, similar to those of a palm tree and also extremely thick, appears before them. This tree always emits a noise which only medicine-men perceive. If this same tree appears to the medicine-men without leaves and quite dry, it presages death for him. He then knows that he has only one year to live. Through magic the medicine-man knows when his last moment is near. He has only to let the tree come. When his time arrives the magic tree comes down from the sky, stops at a certain height above the ground near the medicine-man, who throws himself on the ground, and as soon as he has breathed his last the tree gets up and bursts »like a bomb«. It is the end for the medicine-man and the tree. The soul of the dead medicine-man goes to the sky to the place where the tree had been.

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The medicine-man always knows beforehand when the red grasshopper (*čol*) will come. The striped grasshopper (*talesai*) lives inside a kind of very big gourd (*wotsotáx*). The grasshoppers belong to a master who sends them everywhere. During the summer they are out but at the first cold weather, they return to their squash.

Each year in the month of August, the medicine-men have a ceremony in order to go and see the *lachiwana* bees to ask them to come down to earth once more. For this event the medicine-men snuff *hatax* powder. They go up where the mother of all bees lives. She is as large as a house. To reach her the medicine-men transform themselves into *aguaraguasu* (*Canis jubatus*). The mother of the bees requires presents since she is afraid that by burning the old prairies her children might get burned too.

If someone speaks ill of a medicine-man, the latter's familiar spirit may enter the offender's body and thus avenge the insult. The soul of the medicine-man (*táxumit*) is ferocious. When the medicine-man is at odds with someone, his *táxumit* inflicts illness on the person with whom he is angry and no one except the medicine-man is able to cure the victim. It is wise therefore to stay on good terms with medicine-men.

IV. The Sun and the Medicine-men

The medicine-men may go and visit the Sun, Moon, the Night, the Rain and the Big Fire to make friends with them. During these trips they always go in gangs led by an older man who is expert in the difficult art of overcoming the numerous obstacles they meet on the way. He is the spiritual father of the younger medicine-men. If wandering medicine-men meet those of other villages, they fight and the spirits of those wounded or killed during the trips will be sick or will die on earth, for all that happens to the spirit must inevitably happen to the body. Medicine-men never fight on earth, and only while under the influence of *hatax* do

they fight in the sky. Upon awakening a vanquished medicine-man informs his family of his defeat.

Medicine-men like to visit the Sun for he is like a peddler, he knows everything. To protect the entrance to his abode the Sun has made a slippery trail. Those who step on it slip down and break their necks. The Sun gets the dead and eats them, generally broiled or stewed. The medicine-men know how to escape this danger. They transform themselves into wax and thus stick to the trail, crossing it without running the risk of being devoured by the Sun. The Sun closes the entrance to his abode with a sort of trap. This trap consists of two beams which knock against each other and crush those who try to get between them. Medicine-men who have had no experience get crushed. Those who are skillful transform themselves into humming birds (*cinax*) and thus pass quickly between the beams before they have time to close together. Behind the beams the sun has stretched traps. The medicine-men without experience get caught by their thumbs in these traps. The Sun gets them and kills them. Great medicine-men change into eels and creep between the meshes, thus escaping.

The Sun's abode is surrounded by a palisade of cacti with only one small window. The medicine-men can fly over it if they become humming birds, or they can change into rodents (*sičúm*, a rodent with a flat head) and dig a cave under it. The Sun is very surprised when medicine-men come to him in spite of beams, traps and fences. He goes to his traps and is quite amazed when he does not find anybody in them. When this occurs he has no food. If the soul of a medicine-man is eaten by the Sun, the medicine-man who has stayed on earth dies. When a medicine-man arrives at the Sun's house, after having overcome all the obstacles, he is welcomed by the Sun, who is no longer angry, and in order for the sorcerer to come nearer, the Sun turns colder. Otherwise it would be impossible to approach within 500 yards of him because he burns everything. The Sun asks the medi-

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cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

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IX. Storms

821 When a storm approaches with rain and thunder, little children's ears are to be covered each time the thunder crashes,
761 otherwise Rain would take them under his arm and carry them away to his house. When such a thing happens, the child's body, which has remained on earth, becomes lean and white and all the food he takes is of no use. He visibly pines away, and it is not likely that a medicine-man can cure him. He will finally die without the cause of his death being known. The rain cannot do anything to grown-ups or big children, for it has not the strength to carry them away.
[841] but it can harm menstruating women who happen to be out during a storm. Then they get very feeble.

X. Shooting Stars

821 Shooting stars foretell the death of someone. Meteors are
787 stones thrown by the rain in order to fell the *quebracho*.

XI. Treatment of Snake Bites

752 When a serpent bites a man, it goes into the wound and
825 climbs up in his body. When a man's foot is bitten by a snake the leg must be pressed starting from the thigh, squeezing down to the place where he has been bitten. In so doing, the snake which has already had time to enter the leg, is obliged to go down into the big toe where it rolls itself up, tired. The operation lasts from evening to dawn and when the sun appears the snake gets cramped and vanishes under the ground. Once the snake is out the medicine-man has to suck the wound, for the departing snake has left its skin inside the body of the victim. The patient is completely cured only when the last piece of skin left by the snake has been removed. Otherwise he remains sick, has a headache and gets thinner and thinner.

If the progress of the snake inside the body cannot be stopped, the animal may go up into the head and blind the victim. It also goes to the heart and after repeated bites

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may kill him. The snake's *āhat* is called *punsoya* (perhaps Spanish-ponzoña : poison).

When a man is bitten by a snake he must kill the reptile and take it home in order to be cured rapidly. If he has been bitten while away from his home, he must dig a groove and put the snake into it, facing it in the opposite direction to that which he is taking. Thus the snake cannot enter him.

Tawkxwax taught the men the procedure to be followed in order to cure snake bites.

XII. How to Become a Singer

Those who want to become good singers must go to the bush and stay there for quite a long time. They must kill birds who are good singers and eat them after they have been made into powder and mixed with blood extracted from the arm. When they are in the bush they must first beat a drum, then run. Thus they will perhaps dream about a singing bird. When they wake up they must then take their drums and sing the song they heard in their dreams. One must not awaken until the song is finished or he will not remember it. Everyone has two songs and he must sing them every day in order to learn them. Ordinarily several young men go to the bush and after they have dreamed of a song they sing one after another. Generally three or four days are sufficient to master a song.

One must not sing someone else's song. If after one has eaten a bird he dreams of an iguana, it is no longer worth while to go on, for he will never become a good singer. The birds one dreams about and who teach one how to sing are not ordinary birds, they are *paata* (supernatural beings). The women do not know how to sing but they can cry when they have to mourn. Not all women know how to weep. In order to weep well, a woman must dream about another woman who is a good mourner. There are some exceptional women who can sing.

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XIII. The Diseases

753 776 755 The diseases are demons which have the appearence of men but are invisible. They wear feathers like medicine-men. Smallpox for instance is especially ugly. His head is swollen and full of small holes. He lives not for from Salta, in a cave on a big mountain. The demons of disease live under the ground or within the *yuchanes*. They leave their shelter to enter men and make them sick. In order to get them out of the bodies of sick people one must ask them what they want, for the demons always want something. One has to say, »What do you want?» The demon answers, »Food, dresses, a gun.» All these things are to be given him. But they are equally satisfied with only the sight of these things and men may very well eat the food or make use of the things whose essence the demons have received. It would be very dangerous to eat of a dish before the demon has helped himself. Men dance in order to scare a demon or chase him away. The demon is obliged to participate in the dancing and gets tired. When those who take part in a treatment have danced for a while, the magician speaks to the disease. The disease asks whether they are angry with him. The medicine-man answers, »No, we are dancing as usual.» The disease then says, »Then let us not dance any longer, for I am to dance to-morrow too.»

753 774 Each thing has its *husék* (spirit) or image and it is this image which the disease requires after he has stolen or entered the soul of the man and it is this soul which the medicine-man has gone to get. During the first part of all medical ceremonies, the medicine-man's spirit goes to the disease and asks him which things he wants in return for the sick man's soul.

[124] One of the reasons why the Matako always require payment to let themselves be photographed is that by photographing them one takes their image (spirit) and thus may hurt them. The money they get for the photograph may eventually

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serve to pay the medicine-man in case something happens to them. 753 774

The ceremonial objects whose spirit the disease takes away do not become any weaker, since they may be used directly afterwards.

Even though the disease has been given food, he remains insatiable and wants more. He also wants to take away the things he is offered, that is the reason why the medicine-man is obliged to blow on the objects lest the disease should stick to them. When the disease does not get what he wants, he becomes angry and kills his victim.

The disease, or a bad spirit, introduces into the body of the sick person small sticks, usually objects which will make him feel pain. The medicine-man has to take them away by sucking the aching parts and he blows the patient to get the sicknes out of his body. Before treating a patient a medicine-man adorns himself with feathers in order to look like disease or the demon who caused it. The diseases and the spirits are very fond of these ornaments and enjoy seeing them on those who cure the patient. 753 755

When the malady is not very serious, the patient is treated within his hut for economical reasons. To determine whether or not the patient is to be decorated depends upon the seriousness of his case. The medicine-man and the patient get under the same blanket and the former speaks to the disease. Thus the audience is not too large and the disease is easier to cope with. Sometimes it is satisfied with a quart of alcohol. A sick child is always cured inside the house, except when there is an organized ceremony through which they can profit toward the end. 755

According to the Indians vaccine exerts a powerful action against the disease and he can no longer attack the individuals thus vaccinated. Shots fired at the end of the ceremony puts the disease to flight and prevents him from desiring the gun with which one assistant danced. To keep away sickness it is good to hang the carapace of a *tatu* 751

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careta (big armadillo) or the skin of an alligator in the house. The disease will think that the animals are there and will not go into the house.

a) *The Treatment of Disease*

I attended a ceremony for the treatment of disease. The ceremony took place in front of some huts, the space was closed in by awnings and cloth. Inside the enclosure were the patient, the medicine-man and a certain number of individuals who assisted the latter. The patient, an old man, was sitting in the center of the space, his body carefully covered with cloth. The medicine-man stood near him and while murmuring incantations blew on the patient's body through his half clenched hand, beginning with his back, then the shoulders, the face and so on. In the meantime four or five men were dancing without interruption and made all the noise they could with a belt of big bells. They had tied to their feet anklets of deer hoofs and wore around their waists belts of ostrich feathers and on their heads were diadems. One of them held in his hand a bunch of ostrich feathers.

Their dance consisted of a cadenced and half-jumping walk with slightly bent knees. Some dancers went forward or backward while others stayed in the same spot. During the ceremony the medicine-man received the help of another old man who was also squatting at the patient's side. He began muttering incantations and blowing on the sick man as hard as he could. After one hour of this utterly exhausting exercise, the medicine-man went to a pot full of rice which was carefully concealed by a sheet near the patient. He crouched under the sheet and recited in a supplicative voice a long incantation over the food. Afterwards he blew on the rice with all his strength. He then offered goodly portions of it to all who had taken part in the ceremony. Then the medicine-man went to two *caraguatá* bags full of dresses. He covered them with a cloth under which he crouched. He

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pronounced the same incantation, blew on the dresses which were unfolded and taken away. On the heap of dresses had been placed a gun wrapped in a red belt richly inlaid with shells. One of the dancers seized the gun and slinging it over his shoulder executed a dance bearing a certain likeness to the one he had done before. The dancers were relatives of the sick man, probably his sons.

b) *Treatment of Disease*

A rich woman who was seriously ill was cured by five renowned medicine men. A big open space of about fifteen feet square was cleared not far from her house. Wooden posts were erected and a sort of tent set up. One of the posts, about 20 feet high, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentine flag. Around the tent were placed the objects required by the disease, those which are supposed to please him, a mosquito net, a weaving loom, an old suitcase, pieces of gaudily colored cloth, a saddle, a soldier's coat, a lamp, a lance or a gun. A little further away fires were burning where the disease's food was being prepared and a pail of water was being heated for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a pile of hay and old rags. She had put on her best dress and was covered with ritual ornaments. The five shamans, who were old men, were equally adorned with feather belts, rattles, tropical helmets and other precious objects. The lower part of their faces was painted black.

There were also some twenty dancers wearing feathers, red belts adorned with shells, rattles, caps, red pieces of cloth, whistles and old broken watches, while perhaps ten old women ran about holding rags in their hands and one even held an umbrella. Everybody, including the sick person, danced and sang, at times the medicine-men and the sick woman stopped, they blew on her and the dancing was resumed. After a while the chief medicine-man whistled on

his bone flute and the dance stopped abruptly. The sick woman danced alone, lifting slowly one foot and then the other two or three inches above the ground, without moving from one spot. In the meantime two medicine-men shook their rattles. A man clapped his hands laughing, and others shook their rattle gourds. It lasted for about ten minutes, then the medicine-men joined the dance, but for a short time only. After a pause, two of them approached the sick woman and started undressing her. In the meantime another medicine-man was shaking his rattle all along her body, beginning with the head. All the ornaments were slowly removed, the assistants struck the ground at the place where these ornaments fell, and then picked them up and ran to throw them away. They shook them several times, then put them carefully in order. The sick woman sat up in the middle of her tent and was given a drink. The ceremony was interrupted, then resumed again. The entire ceremony lasted from the 20th to the 24th of March, every day from 8 to 11 o'clock and in the evening from 8 to 10 o'clock. Shots were fired every day in order to drive away the disease.

On the 26th of March another woman, who manifested the same symptoms as the first, was cured in the following way: The place already described was used, but the flag was removed and replaced with a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers and on top of the staff there was tied a large bunch of ostrich feathers. The staff itself was decorated with ritual belts, woolen belts trimmed with snail shell beads. On the cross-bars, which separated the tent from the village, offerings of the same type as for the preceding ceremony were placed. During the cure, the sick woman remained sitting the whole time on a pile of hay in the center of the tent, surrounded by four medicine-men and about ten dancers, and further away were six or seven women. All were adorned with ritual belts and bells and all were dancing and singing. A passage had been opened between the cross-bars which was meant as an exit for the disease. If someone

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stood in the entrance he did not prevent the disease from escaping but he did expose himself to contracting it.

At a signal from the chief medicine-men, the dancing was interrupted. Two men seized a white and red striped poncho by its extremities and began to dance, making side jumps legs parted. They went to the sick person and put the poncho on her, then they ran with it to the exit and shook it there. They repeated this several times, then they wrapped the woman from head to foot with the poncho and a medicine-man started rubbing her through the cloth, while everybody sang without dancing. After a while the twisted poncho was removed, taken to the exit and thrown away. Then the dance began again. An assistant sprinkled water on the ground and the chief medicine-man stopped the dance once more. He set down near the sick woman, covering himself entirely with a large black blanket and started speaking to the disease. In the meantine, the man who was moistening the ground brought a pail of water and with the assistance of one of the medicine-men he washed the face, head and body of the patient, then she was placed with her feet toward the exit. During the course of the dance, the assistant moistened the shoulders of the male dancers, while an old man painted the women's faces, making two red dots on their cheeks and a stripe along the nose. During this dance a medicine-man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a piece of red cloth. After a while the woman lay down and the dance went on, the paricipants assuming threatening expressions, then suddenly all looked very satisfied. The ceremony was interrupted, then after an hour's time it was resumed.

On the following day another woman was taken sick — but not such a rich one — and another treatment of a more modest character was undertaken. In front of the woman's house a tent was stretched and she was placed in the tent. The offerings consisted only of some pieces of cloth and a few bags. When I arrived the chief medicine-man was speak-

ing to the disease while an old woman, who was a magician, sang and blew on the patient. The others were talking among themselves without paying any attention to what was happening. After a pause, during which everybody drank some of the wine required by the disease, a singing man started to run around the patient, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine-man spoke once more with disease while the medicine-woman continued blowing on the patient and another medicine-man placed around the head of the patient front pages of illustrated papers and popular novels. The man who was running stopped and the chief medicine-man started talking with the others. Everybody sat down and drank some water, then two women began to walk rapidly around the others while they sang. One of them stopped and after a short while the other one stopped too. Then all who were present started dancing. The dance was interrupted only by the coughing of the patient who seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. She actually died during the ceremony. Immediately after her death the dance stopped. The old women ran about singing and shaking their rattles. Two men laid the dead woman on her right side and folded her legs and arms. They wrapped her in the pieces of cloth on which she had been lying and she was taken to her home. The medicine-men undressed quietly while the women of the family uttered lamentations.

c) *General Expulsion of Disease*

The ceremony for general expulsion of disease took place early in the morning in the open air, far from all houses. It was performed by all the medicine-men of the village standing in a row. All were holding in their hands a rattle-gourd and a bone whistle. Some were provided with strips of cloth to which were attached rattles; the strips were worn across the chest or hung at the elbow. Others wore ceremonial shirts. some wore shirts made of *caraguatá* fiber and one

wore a red knitted shirt of wool decorated with shells. Many wore on their foreheads frontlets trimmed with feathers. Another ceremonial accessory worn by most of them consisted of a bunch ostrich or *potsax* feathers. Two especially famous medicine-men had their faces painted black and red and on the hat of one of them were ostrich feathers. Naturally among the performers were a number of women, some of whom had their cheeks painted red. In front of the performer's row some spears had been stuck into the ground with the points downward. A spear with the point upward was also stuck in the ground at the same distance away as the others. During the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was fixed to the spear with the head pointed up. When I arrived I noticed in front of the row a young man who was not a magician. He was grinding into a calabash the *hatax* seeds from which the medicine-men later took pinches.

The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical to that sung by the medicine-men when curing diseases. The singing was punctuated by the rattling of the gourds and from time to time by the clacking of hoof and rattle necklaces and the whistling of the flutes. Each blowing of the whistle indicated a new phase in the traditional sequence of events associated with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine-man, its arrival or departure from a given place). The rattle-gourd is sometimes brandished in a theatening manner as though to scare away an invisible being. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, some of the performers took a snuff of *hatax* powder. Those who had bunches of feathers stretched them forward making the same gesture which has already been described when speaking of the rattles. One of the performers was running in front and behind his colleagues, holding a bunch of feathers in his hand and dusting them off from head to foot. He was assisted by another who was holding bells and rattles which he shook behind his companions. After they had taken a snuff of *hatax* the performers went on singing, shak-

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ing the rattles and performing threatening gestures. Some of the medicine-men sang the song of their own spirits ignoring the chants of their colleagues.

These preliminaries were succeeded by a direct attack against the disease. Some individuals stepped out from the row and with violent gestures each brandished his bunch of feathers or the rattle-gourds then returned to their places in line. A man began kicking the earth and was immediately imitated by others who took up handfuls of dust which they threw in front of themselves. The whole troop followed this example and they rushed against the disease. Some concentrated all their strength on a special spot as though they had driven the Disease there, hitting the spot repeatedly with their sabers or bunches of feathers, then stamping on the ground as though they had buried their victim. The attack against the invisible enemy lasted for a long time, much enthusiasm being shown. Others brandished bunches of feathers which they had tied to the points of their spears.

The second part of the ceremony corresponds to what we might call a general desinfection. The medicine-men first wiped one another off, then let their gourds rattle quite close to their colleagues, then blew on each other's heads and necks as though for illness. Then everyone, both men and women, who had attended the ceremony were called. They all sat down and the medicine-men and-women went to them, wiped their bodies with bunches of feathers, blew on their heads and let the rattles tinkle all along their bodies. These rites were performed with the same care on children as on adults. Our friend Sanchez was given special attention. After having been blown on by the *cacique* and chief medicine-man, assisted by four magicians, two of whom blew on him and sang, the others shook their rattles, bells and gourds. The medicine-men who had remained in the same place turned around and repeated all the gestures they had performed before. Once more some of them stepped out of the file to cut grass under which they frantically buried the

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disease. The sounds of the whistles followed each other at closer intervals and the rattles were shaken with still more energy and persistance. The ceremony was finished when all the members of the community were relieved of the bad influence which had entered them. The expelled disease was the aphtous fever from which the cattle were suffering at that time and which seriously affected the health of many individuals, who had eaten contaminated meat and become ill.

The medicine-men had changed their spirits into *istins* (sort of ravens) to call on the disease. As the disease was particularly severe at this time the first attempt at conciliation did not meet with much success. The men had to change into *masa* (earth bees). When the disease is being expelled, it is chased into the ground.

XIV. Treatment of People Possessed by Ho?nat-Lele

Upon visiting a Matako settlement (near Las Lomitas, Formosa) one night I had the opportunity to be present at the curing of two cases of demoniac possession. In the first case the patient was a girl of 13 or 14 and in the other a child. The girl had gone to the bush and had been caught by a *ŋoLe* or a *ho?nat-Lele* who lives in thickets under the earth. It was not a *welán* who entered the body of the girl as the *welán* live in the *yuchan* only and the girl had not walked near one of these trees. The *ho?nat-Lele* made its presence known through the girl's hysterical fits. She cried and sobbed as though she were in pain. The Indians told me something was hurting her, although she did not suffer from any disease. They laid particular stress upon this fact. When I arrived the girl was surrounded by an old man who acted as medicine-man, her father, two aunts and another man, whose relationship with the patient I was unable to determine. Each had put on a red poncho with white stripes. The possessed girl and all those with her were standing, with the exception of the medicine-man, who was squatting near the patient's legs.

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They were as close to the patient as possible and were muttering a low and monotonous chant, marking the rhythm with movements of their bodies. The medicine-man sang in a loud voice and shook rhythmically at regular intervals a belt from which hung hoofs and metal rattles. He brought his instrument quite close to the possessed woman then pulled it back against himself. At a certain moment he pressed the girl's legs with his arms and let the bells tinkle behind her. The poncho was suddenly taken away and the possessed girl burst into tears. I could then observe that she was richly attired and dressed in red. On her head were several broad red belts to which were sewn shell discs. Around her neck and across her breast she wore some collars made of shells and white glass beads in a meshlike pattern.

The medicine-man got up, with the assistance of the spectators, and blew with all his strength on the body of the possessed woman. Instead of becoming quiet she sobbed harder than ever and threw herself into the arms of one of her aunts. Each time she behaved in this manner the medicine-man blew and shook his rattle. As she seemed to be about to fall into a swoon they let her sit down carefully and at her side her relatives sat speaking kindly to her as though to console or quiet her. Then the girl, her aunts and the medicine-man were covered with the same red poncho, the end of which one of the spectators kept in his hand moving it up and down. The medicine-man sang his vociferous chant and shook his bells against his patient once more.

When the poncho was removed I noticed that the woman seemed calmed. She was leaning her head against the shoulder of one of her aunts and nobody spoke. After a while she started to complain again. The medicine-man immediately shook his bells and his assistants consoled her in low voices. One of the women took away all her ornaments, folded them carefully and put them into a bag. Those present remained sitting for some time without uttering a word. The silence was broken only by the medicine-man blowing

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on the sick woman. Then, as she seemed to have quited down, they started smoking and talking together. The possessed woman even accepted a cigarette.

Observations made by natives during the performance: The adornments are worn by the patient on behalf of the spirit who is fond of the colors. The songs and the noise of the bells are also intended to please the spirit who, charmed by the ornaments and the noise, gets quieter and leaves the patient.

During this treatment another group of about eight Indians were participating in a similar ceremony. They were dancing around a kind of improvised altar which consisted of a stick surrounded by four smaller ones forming a cross. The central stick was topped by palm leaves, the ends of which were wrapped in paper strips painted red. The four other sticks bore palm leaves painted red with the ends cut off. These sticks were inserted into wooden stands painted alternately red and black and connected in pairs by transverse rods. The whole structure was resting on some rags. A rolled poncho belonging to the medicine-man had been laid near the central stick. The ground for the ceremony had been carefully swept. According to my informant the central stick contained the injurious element which had caused the disease. That stick was supposed to be loaded with bad influences and I was warned not to touch it.

The dancers wore different costumes. Two of them had belts of ostrich feathers, and feather wreaths on their heads. In addition they wore bells and rattles on their breasts, around their loins and their ankles. Around their necks they wore necklaces of sea shells and in one hand they held a bunch of ostrich feathers. The other dancers wore their ordinary clothes with the exception of their headbands and the bells and feathers they wore on their ankles.

When I arrived they were dancing in a circle around the altar, from right to left, looking straight ahead. Their dance step might be defined as a jerky jog-trot. They accompanied

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They accompanied
755 themselves with a very deep song, a sort of *heh, heh,* repeated
535 rhythmically but on different notes. When the dancers
[533] got tired they left the file without ceasing to sing, and after they had rested for a while they resumed their places.

The second part consisted of dancing couples. The dancers faced each other in twos, and holding each other by the arm made side jumps, holding their legs parallel but slightly apart. Always moving from right to left they went several times round the altar, from time to time spinning themselves about. When they stopped to catch their breath one of them uttered a loud cry and started to dance alone, that is to say, making side jumps with parted and stiff legs, always facing the altar, although he whirled now and then. After spinning around twice he was joined by the others. They stopped dancing, sat down and one of them took off his ornaments. Another dancer covered himself entirely with a poncho and uttered his ë ë ë, always in the same tone. The medicine-man went to get the poncho he had left near the altar, he put it on the child and started to sing and to blow on the little patient. The dancer who had covered himself with the poncho kept silent, but remained under his cover. When the ceremony was over he began to sing.

a) *Treatment of a Man Possessed by a Spirit*

755 A man was caught by a spirit at about 9 P. M. He was decorated with red belts and placed in the center of the ceremonial ground. He was given two bells and in front of him were stuck three sticks, one of which about 2 yards long was totally covered with a rather dark cloth, the other two between 2½ and 3 feet high had rags and bunches of ostrich feathers fastened to their tops. The two medicine-men, wearing only belts of ostrich feathers and holding in their hands metal rattles, were standing by the side of the patient. A little further away were two assistants (probably

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relatives of the patient) and three dancers. All wore rattles. 755

The medicine-men sang and blew on the patient, who shook the bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in one place and let their rattles jingle. The dancers then started to run from left to right and thus made a complete circle. For the second turn, when they arrived at the height of the sticks, they reversed and ran around in the opposite direction, then reversed again and so on. While the assistants were stamping their feet, singing and shaking their rattles, the medicine-men went on singing and blowing. The patient had not moved during the dance. After they had run around ten times, the dancers went to rest, smoke and talk with the assistants, but the medicine-men still blew and shook their rattles. The patient was still motionless. After a quarter of an hour the dance was resumed, this time to the accompaniment of the patient's bells and rattles which all present were shaking. All seemed to be rather happy. The ceremony was then over and they sat down to smoke. The sticks were removed and the ornaments taken off, first those of the medicine-men, then the assistants and dancers, and finally those of the patient. The patient returned quietly to his hut. 755 535

XV. Sexual Life

Before marriage nothing prevents young people from having a free sexual life. The girls paint their faces red if they have had sexual intercourse the preceding night. §36 302

In love affairs before marriage it is always the women who take the initiative. §36

If a man has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman his loins and head will ache. As for the woman, she is in no danger. §33 §41

You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. §34 §28

a) *Conception*

831 Sperm is located in the knee. In order to cause an abun-
262 dant secretion of sperm, it is advisable to drink broth and milk and to eat chickens. It is important not to drink the broth of a bird called *čana* for the child would then be lazy. In order to have healthy children it is highly recommended that the broth of an aquatic bird called *aṣkan* be drunk;
842 The child is formed by the sperm which is assimilated into milk. The »milk» coagulates and fills up the matrix, thus do children form themselves gradually. The presence of the child in a mother's womb prevents the blood from
[843] flowing and menstruation stops. Pregnancy lasts eight months.

842 It is impossible for a man not to procreate children. Only
789 women can be sterile. Sterility may occur because the woman has been stopped up by a medicine-man, thus man's »milk» can no longer penetrate into her bosom. This may be accounted for in two ways. A woman may ask a medicine-man to make her sterile, or a bad medicine-man may make a woman sterile in order to harm her family. Sterility may be cured by a medicine-man, but the task is not easy and there are few who will attempt it.

b) *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

843 A pregnant woman works but little, she most eat sufficient, but not too much, food. The child, still in the mother's womb, sucks the food absorbed by its father and mother and if they were to eat too much the child would get fat and would be unable to come out. The husband of an expectant mother must give up certain kinds or work. He cannot use a knife or an axe for the strokes of any cutting instrument might kill or wound the child. He must not wear boots lest the child's legs be crooked. If he keeps his hat on his head the skull of the child will be flat. He must not write with ink lest the child's face be covered with marks.

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLot*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-loi* »bread», *hapʔap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[578] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
[831] must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened
825 bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

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with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

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533 into a walk, the right foot moving first and the left one being
535 slowly brought up to it. The direction of the walk is always from left to right. The rhythm of the song becomes more and more accelerated, transforming itself into a rather rapid running, always in the same direction, the right foot stamping heavily on the ground thus marking the time. After fifteen minutes more or less, the dancers stop at a signal given by their leader, then begin again.

535 2. The dancers stand in two equal lines facing each other with their arms resting on their neighbor's shoulders. Between the two files the leader stands alone. When he gives a signal both files begin moving and singing. One of the files goes toward the other while the latter withdraws at a slow trot. In the meantime the leader runs between the files and along them, going more quickly than the dancers. Each time he runs around twice he points out a dancer in one of the files, who then moves rapidly toward the opposite file, choses a dancer and draws him out. Gradually the total number of dancers diminishes. When there are only three left, the leader nods to one of the remaining three, telling him to choose a dancer in the opposite file, then the game goes on in the opposite direction.

3. The dancers form two or more files, standing one behind the other, holding each other by the waist, singing and shouting. They start running, each file trying to dislodge the other line and throw down the dancers, being careful themselves not to be separated. In order to defend themselves the files run beside each other and when they think the time has come they try to cut the others off and throw disorder into the opposite side.

4. This dance begins like the first one, the difference being that the dancers' hands rest on the shoulders and not on the hips. Once the circle has started running it is broken up suddenly at one point and divided into several files that first stamp and then start running, forming a spiral which grows tighter and tighter. When they stand so close together

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that all movement is impossible except to stamp, the spiral begins to unfold itself, first very slowly, then more and more quickly. The dancers are sometimes many. The circle divides into two files which develop simultaneously on both sides of the enclosure.

5. The young men form a file from the center of the dance enclosure to the outer border. Each dancer puts his hand on the shoulder of one neighbor and his other hand on the hip of his other neighbor. The file starts slowly to move; the man in the center whirls himself in a circle and the others follow the movement. The movement is faster toward the outer ends of the file and is accompanied by songs. Sometimes the singing stops but the movement goes on, then the singing starts again.

From time to time the dance is interrupted by a young man following a girl. After they have been running through the dancing place of the village they ordinarily sleep together and on the following day appear with their faces painted red.

According to my informant the dancing songs have no meaning, being mere rhythmic utterances.

XIX. Mourning Rites

A man is buried in the bush in a grave about six feet deep immediately after dying. The dead are buried reclining on their right sides with their faces toward their fields. If they were placed in any other position they could not find the way to their houses and they would become lost. No food is given to the dead except a calabash half filled with water. The soul drinks this water to quench his thirst during his journey to the underworld. All the personal belongings of the deceased are burned and their souls come out to join the soul of their owner. His animals are not killed, but when they die their souls join that of their master.

Immediately after death all grown up members of the deceased, even very remote relatives, begin to weep, ac-

764 companying themselves on rattles and drums. These laments last for about one hour after death, then begin again when the corpse is carried away to be buried and finally when they come back from the burial. But on the following day only very near relatives parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, go on weeping. Those who were already mourning for someone else weep louder than the others because they mourn for two.

765 The laments take place at sunrise and at sunset as well as in the middle of the afternoon. During the first days of mourning the near relatives of the deceased go to his home to mourn. There they run and dance, going continually [535] from one place to another and shaking their rattles with both hands. They accompany the dance with lamentations. With the exception of the wife of the deceased, women always mourn in this way, shaking rattles, dancing and lamentations. Mourning women must not appear bareheaded or with a naked face for they ought not to be seen. People [533] sing and play on rattles during the mourning period in order that the dead person may readily be forgotten. The laments which last two or three hours every day are supposed to help the living forget the dead. After six months, more or less, they weep only at dawn and even then very rarely. [302] The relatives of the dead person must cut off their hair in order not to displease the dead who would attack their heads and make them bald. The wife, at the death of her husband, observes mourning for two years. She shuts herself up in a special little hut often adjoining the hut of her married son, or daughter if she has no son.

768 The house of the deceased is pulled down and a new one built about 10 yards away. If this were not done the dead man would come back within fourteen days after death, attracted by memories of his previous life. The materials of the old house are used in the construction of the new one.

A widow may leave her home to satisfy her wants only at night. If she goes out during the day the dead man gets

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angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

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of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *ăxŏlĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

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inch; there the punctures are to be made until the blood flows. If a first treatment proves insufficient it must be repeated until loss of blood relieves congestion and eases the limb.

To stop a hemorrhage one must burn an old hat or some old rag and put the ashes on the wound. When one is pricked by a thorn one must suck the blood to prevent inflammation.

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COD

Report on the Ethnography of the Mataco Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco
(Nota Etnografica Sobre Los Indios Mataco del Gran Chaco Argentino)

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[Title page]

Report on the Ethnography of the Mataco Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco

1.4 [7] The ethnography of the Argentine Gran Chaco is still very little known, and will continue thus, for ever, if we do not make the effort now to study systematically the last tribes of Indians still extant but fast disappearing or being assimilated into the non-Indian population.

Our best sources for the study of the ethnography of the Chaco still are the Jesuit missionaries of the eighteenth century: Dobrizhoffer, Paucke, Sánchez Labrador, Lozano and Jolis. Present day authors have studied the more directly accessible aspects of the Indian civilizations and therefore their contributions give us only a very superficial idea of Indian life as it is still lived on the Bermejo or Pilcomayo rivers. Even within the realm of material culture, open as it is to all, we are merely given catalogues of objects instead of the information which we might expect regarding economic life and techniques in the broadest sense of the word. Often the living Indians of the Chaco are treated as though they were archeological sites. It would be preferable to allow modern ethnography to take the place of archeology, rather than the other way about.

We have only a very vague idea as to the religious beliefs of those Indians. Descriptions of dances or speculations regarding animism are poor substitutes for an analysis of their beliefs and practices. As for the sociology of the Chaco, it is almost virgin ground [8] and contemporary studies dealing with it are very much below the standard of those made in the eighteenth century.

In 1939, on the occasion of my last trip to the Argentine Chaco, I had hoped to gather the necessary material on the Matacos. The state of my health kept me from doing so. For this reason I must publish the results of this trip in separate articles. In the present state of our knowledge, every new fact, if it has been precisely observed, becomes important. This consideration, together with the encouragement of my friend Doctor Fernando Márquez Miranda, prompts me to publish certain portions of my field notes. They have no other worth than that of being unpublished to date and of having been set

114 down on the field, from the reports of excellent informants. They have been obtained in San Andres and Yuto, on the Pilcomayo river, and in San Patricio, on the river Bermejo.

Birth and Infancy

842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this is considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made

843 from a certain tuber which has been roasted and then ground in a mortar. The husband unties his belt and undoes the knot in his tie so that the umbilical cord not wrap itself about the child's neck.

844 Only on rare occasions are there any complications at birth. According to the observations of a medical missionary, Doctor Collins Smith, labor lasts about two [sic] hours for the first child and around four or five hours for the others. A delivery often gathers a numerous crowd, and the neighbors take up positions close to the woman who is in labor, without showing any particular interest, but ready to take part should it be necessary to render any assistance. Old women, greatly experienced, come to assist the woman in labor, especially if the delivery is a difficult one. These benevolent matrons usually receive a gift--a goat or a piece of cloth--by way of payment for their trouble.

The pregnant woman who is about to deliver is placed on the thighs of one of these crones, who is seated cross-legged on the ground. She takes hold, with both hands, of a pole which is stuck vertically into the earth in front of her and grips it firmly as the pains become greater. Other informants have told me that women give birth to their babies in a squatting position directly onto the ground; but they confirmed the matter of the use of a rod or pole stuck into the earth. If the labor is difficult or longer than is usual, one of the matrons presses the body of the uterus with her hands as would a doctor wishing to expulse the placenta mechanically. If the woman in labor is unable to keep her sitting position, she lies down in such a manner that one of the helpers may rest her knee against the perineum, while another woman massages her in the uterine region.

Any mishap which may occur in the process is [10] attributed to witchcraft or to the husband's negligence who may have violated one of the numerous "tabus" which he is obliged to observe.

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife. It is never cut before the appearance of the placenta, as a child's life is not complete until his placenta has been expelled. According to one of my informants [752] the navel wound is cauterized with an incandescent pumpkin stalk. If the placenta is long in coming, the women exert upon the abdomen the same type of pressure used to accelerate the baby's birth. The placenta is buried without any kind of ceremony. The umbilical cord is dried and put into a little leather bag in the shape of a rhomboid, which the child carries about his neck until he is ten years old.

845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana. All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child. In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

853 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert. When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child. The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

855 and carry on, his mother essayed to see whether dragging him off to some distance from the hut would help, but he struggled and rolled on the ground. Finally she controlled him and, without any short temperedness, and laughing all the time she set him down a few yards from the house where the child continued to cry but did not dare to return.

857 861 This same gentleness and absence of brutality can be observed among playing children. Thus, on numerous occasions I have been able to observe little children vying for possession of a small ball; they would push and charge into each other, but never maliciously or violently. Mataco education stresses sweetness and gentleness and a [151] violent man or one of evil character (witsax) [? Translator] inspires them with fear and disgust. From the tenderest age children learn to share their food. When I used to distribute candy the children would never fail to let the absent ones know so that they might have a part of what was being given.

Abortion and Infanticide

847 Abortion and infanticide used to be practiced by the Matacos on a large scale, as also among the other Chaco tribes. According to my informants, a woman has an abortion when she is pregnant and not married; when she has been abandoned by her husband or, after a quarrel with him, for vengeance. Many women undergo abortions when they are [12] pregnant for the first time, in the hope that such action will make future deliveries easier.

It is very generally held that the Chaco Indian women use powerful drugs to cause abortion, but this is doubtless merely legendary. The aids of which they make use are purely mechanical. During the fifth month after conception they get a friend to pound them on their abdomen until the blood begins to flow.

Marriage

832 In amorous relations the young girls appear to take more of the initiative than do the men. They easily become provocative and make

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [568] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

575 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

The Functions of the Chief

622 The ex-chief of the San Andrés region, on the Pilcomayo river, was the famous Cuchitoro, who received three leagues of land along the river from the government of Argentina. The present day chief of this region is called Santiago, and he was made chief by the white colonizers who hoped to win him to their service. Nevertheless, Santiago remained loyal to his people.

The principal functions of the chief, according to their [648] description to me at San Andrés, consist nowadays in representing his tribe before the whites and in patching up, amicably, any conflicts 622 arising between groups of Indians in his territory. If a murder is com- 627 mitted in one group it is the chief's duty to require the killer's family 682 to pay the blood price. The amount of such compensation depends upon the social status of the victim. If it is a matter of an old and inactive man the loss is considered of little importance and a couple of goats and an old rifle are sufficient to re-establish friendly relations between the victim's and the murderer's groups. In other cases the injured party demands a horse, three goats, a rifle, etc. If the blood price is put too high the chief in charge of the matter may seek out the head of the dead man's family and ask him to lower the price. [14]

682 In former times the law of an eye for an eye was meticulously carried out. The Indians of San Andrés had killed a man from a neighboring village whose inhabitants then emigrated to the Bermejo river. Fifteen years later a nephew of the dead man made the entire trip from the Bemejo to the Pilcomayo to square matters with the murderers and killed, in his turn, one of the Indians of the village. He then returned to the Bermejo without being pursued.

726 The last Indian war took place in the San Andrés region in 1928. The people of the village of San Martín attacked San Andrés, under cover of darkness. Firing continued until daylight, but--as often happens in these battles--no one was killed or wounded. Some time later the people of Yuto joined with the inhabitants of San Andrés to attack the San Martín Indians. They passed by the Mission composed and dressed for war, painted and adorned with feathers. Before the attack they executed a war dance in the bed of the Pilcomayo river,

726 which was dry at the time. Then, moving along the left bank, they came upon the people of San Martín from the rear, cutting off their retreat. A large number of the latter, mostly women and children [127] were killed or wounded. The Yuto people carried off a child with them as a prisoner.

Divers Religious Beliefs

776 158 Among the spirits the most to be feared are the wilan who possess their victims and sink them into a state of furious madness. Thus, in the San Patricio mission a young girl all at once became pale, her eyes starting from their sockets. She fled, bolting into the wooded area, where she remained for four days. Those who followed her said that her tracks disappeared as suddenly as if the girl had flown through the air.

Another girl got up from a fainting spell during which she had been under the care of four witch doctors and said that a spirit had entered her.

Here is a case which took place in San Andrés a short time before my arrival. A Mataco had gone off to some distance from the village in search of a horse. On the way back he imagined that he saw against [15] a tree, a small luminous being, about the size of a cooking pot, which leaped from tree to tree and finally disappeared in the underbrush. Frightened, our Indian fled to the village where he fell in a faint and was shaken by violent convulsions. Doctor C. Smith had to give him a morphine injection to quiet him. The Indian got better and a few days later felt well enough to go out into the surrounding area. On the way back he had the same experience and suffered like aberrations. His parents, shaking with fright, went to get the doctor so that he might give him an injection. According to Dr. C. Smith, such hallucinations may be the result of kidney trouble, which causes the diseased person to have optical illusions, especially the apparition of luminous spots before the eyes. Certain strange and sinister sounds, also, which the Mataco Indians attribute to spirits [82] are really made by nocturnal birds. And a meteor, which fell into the Pilcomayo during my stay there was explained to me by the Matacos as the fall of an old man with gray hair.

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [824] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a super- [278] natural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made [624] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranas" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birds (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[562] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing.

Magic

789 609 The Matacos of San Andrés complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

Funeral Rites

763 If the eyes of a dying person become fixed in a stare, his soul cannot escape and his agony is prolonged. That is why the Matacos cover the faces of the dying with a piece of cloth and knot it about the throat. This cloth often contributes to accelerate the end by asphyxiating them. Their rush to bury the dead is so great that it sometimes results in the interment of persons who are still alive.

764 The widow, her head shaved, is isolated in a corner of the hut, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain, or else she is placed in a small annex attached to the hut.

[62] Immediately after the death of a young man who had committed suicide in the village of San Patricio, his mother crouched on the earth, placed the dead boy's head on her knees and began to grieve for him, saying repeatedly the word "yos," "yos" (my son, my son). The father beat a drum, day and night in accompaniment of a dirge in which the expression "yos," "yos," was much in evidence. A group of women, under the direction of the mother who was shaking a rattle [18] executed a dance which consisted of little jumpy steps near the place where the corpse had been placed before the burial.

[581] A widower or a widow may marry again two or three months after their spouse's demise. The women excuse themselves by saying: "I had to eat, I need someone who will clothe me."

Burial up in a tree, as described by Enrique Palavecino, used at one time to be very common in the middle region of the Bermejo.

Belief in the Reality of Dreams

787 842 The missionary Barbrooke Grubb has given numerous examples of the belief of the Lengua Indians in the reality of dreams. I have myself collected a good many examples of this belief among the Tobas and Pilagas. Here is an anecdote which illustrates this attitude among the Matacos. A girl from the village of San Patricio woke up weeping one beautiful morning. When asked about the cause of her sorrow, she answered that she had dreamed that she had had sexual relations with a young man and was afraid of becoming pregnant... (Footnote: Sent from the Smithsonian Institute of Washington by the author, a corresponding member. Translated from the French by Dr. Fernando Márquez Miranda, also a member).

4: Metraux SI7 Mataco

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NOTA ETNOGRAFICA SOBRE LOS INDIOS MATACO DEL GRAN CHACO ARGENTINO

por

A. METRAUX

LA etnografía del Gran Chaco argentino nos es todavía muy mal conocida y seguirá siéndolo, para siempre, sino nos apresuramos a estudiar, sistemáticamente, las últimas tribus indígenas que viven todavía, pero que desaparecen rápidamente o se asimilan a la población criolla.

Nuestras mejores fuentes para el estudio de la etnografía del Chaco son, todavía, los misioneros Jesuítas del siglo XVIII, Dobrizhoffer, Pauke, Sánchez Labrador, Lozano y Jolís. Los autores contemporáneos han estudiado los aspectos más directamente accesible de las civilizaciones indígenas y, por ello, sus contribuciones no nos dan más que una imagen muy superficial de la vida indígena, tal como ella continúa sobre el Bermejo o el Pilcomayo. Aun en el dominio de la cultura material, abierta a todos, se nos da catálogos de objetos en lugar de datos que estaríamos en el derecho de esperar sobre la vida económica y las técnicas, en el sentido más amplio de la palabra. A menudo se trata de los indios vivientes del Chaco como si se tratara de sitios arqueológicos. Será preferible transponer la etnografía moderna en la arqueología, más bien que librarse a la operación inversa.

No tenemos más, que una idea muy vaga de las creencias religiosas de esos indios. Descripciones de danzas o de especulaciones animistas no son más que un magro sustituto para un análisis de las creencias y de los ritos. En cuanto a la sociología del Chaco, es un terreno casi virgen

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y los trabajos contemporáneos son, en este sentido, bien inferiores a los del siglo XVIII.

En 1939, en ocasión de mi último viaje al Chaco argentino, había esperado reunir el material necesario de los Mataco. Mi estado de salud me ha impedido realizar ese proyecto. Por ello me veo obligado a publicar los resultados de ese viaje bajo la forma de artículos separados. En el estado actual de nuestros conocimientos, todo hecho nuevo, si ha sido concienzudamente observado, se convierte en importante. Esta consideración, unida al alentamiento de mi amigo el doctor Fernando Márquez Miranda, es lo que me impulsa a publicar algunas notas extraídas de mi libreta de viaje. Ellas no tienen otro mérito que el de ser inéditas y el de haber sido recogidas sobre el terreno, de boca de excelentes informantes. Han sido obtenidas en San Andrés y Yuto, sobre el Pilcomayo, y en San Patricio, sobre el Bermejo.

El nacimiento y la infancia.

Un hijo es producido por la simiente del padre, que germina, como una planta, en el seno de la madre. La esterilidad es siempre considerada por los Mataco como por la falta de la madre. La explican como un accidente provocado por algún hechicero que usa de su magia para impedir que el esperma penetre en el cuerpo de la mujer. Algunas mujeres, se dice, se dirigen a un hechicero para que les impida concebir. Los hechiceros pueden, además, disipar el encantamiento, aunque esta operación es considerado como particularmente difícil.

Una mujer encinta come con moderación, para evitar que la criatura se haga demasiado grande y nazca difícilmente. Los lazos místicos que unen un padre a su hijo encuentran su expresión en un gran número de "*tabu*". Así, poco antes del nacimiento del niño el padre debe abstenerse de todo trabajo que pueda hacer que el niño nazca deforme. Le es particularmente prohibido servirse de instrumentos cortantes (hachas, cuchillos, azadas), sin lo cual el niño podría venir al mundo con heridas: un hocico de liebre, por ejemplo. El padre tiene cuidado de no llevar sandalias ni zapatos, para evitar que uno de los pies de la criatura sea más grande que el otro. Si el padre se pone un sombrero, el niño tendrá

la parte superior del cráneo completamente chata. Los indios de las Misiones evitan hasta escribir, de miedo de que el rostro de su retoño no resulte surcado de marcas.

Si un futuro padre no mata en la cacería más que animales machos, será signo que el niño por nacer es un varón.

Diversas precauciones son tomadas, igualmente, por las mujeres antes de la parición. Evitan ceñirse demasiado fuertemente con su cinturón y acostarse en una posición susceptible de complicar el nacimiento. Algunas mujeres usan drogas para asegurarse contra todo accidente. Así, toman un polvo hecho de un tubérculo asado y molido en un mortero. El marido desata su cinturón y desanuda su corbata, para que el cordón umbilical no se enrosque alrededor del cuello del niño.

Es raro que los nacimientos ofrezcan algunas complicaciones. Según las observaciones de un médico misionero, el doctor Collins Smith, duran alrededor de dos horas para un primer hijo, y alrededor de cuatro o cinco horas para los siguientes. Un nacimiento atrae, a menudo, un público numeroso, y los vecinos se colocan cerca de la mujer que se debate, sin mostrar interés particular, pero prontos a intervenir si hay necesidad de alguna ayuda. Mujeres ancianas y llenas de experiencia vienen a asistir a la parturienta, sobre todo si el parto presenta alguna dificultad. Esas matronas benévolas reciben generalmente un regalo —una cabra o una pieza de género— en pago de sus molestias.

La parturienta se coloca sobre los muslos de una de esas ancianas, la cual está sentada en tierra con las piernas cruzadas. Se toma, a dos manos, de un bastón plantado verticalmente delante de ella y se agarra fuertemente a él a medida que los dolores se hacen más fuertes. Otros informantes me han dicho que la mujer daba a luz en cuclillas directamente sobre el suelo; pero me han confirmado el uso del bastón. Si la parición es laboriosa o más larga que lo habitual, una de las matronas aprieta con sus manos el cuerpo del útero, como un médico que busca expulsar la placenta mecánicamente. Si la parturienta no puede mantener la posición sentada, se acuesta de tal manera que una de las asistentas pueda apoyar su rodilla contra el perineo, mientras que otra mujer le da masajes en la región uterina.

Todo accidente que sobrevenga en el curso de la operación es atri-

huído a la hechicería o a la negligencia del marido que puede haber violado uno de los numerosos "*tabu*" que estaba obligado o observar.

El cordón umbilical es cortado con un cuchillo. No es nunca cortado antes de que la placenta haya salido, pues la existencia de un niño no es completa hasta que su placenta no ha sido expulsada. Según uno de mis informantes, la herida del ombligo sería cauterizada con un tallo de zapallo incandescente. Si la placenta tarda en salir, las matronas ejercen sobre el abdomen las mismas presiones que para acelerar el nacimiento del bebé. La placenta es enterrada sin ninguna ceremonia. El cordón umbilical es secado y puesto en un saquito de cuero, en forma de rombo, que el niño lleva, colgado a su cuello, hasta la edad de diez años.

Una criatura muerta al nacer es enterrada, inmediatamente, sin ningún rito: Es considerado como un desbecho, al mismo título que la placenta. Por el contrario, si el niño muere después de haber vivido durante algunas horas, es enterrado según los ritos funerarios tradicionales.

Después del nacimiento, el padre y la madre continúan tomando diversas precauciones de orden mágico, para no perjudicar la salud de la criatura. Se abstienen de diversos alimentos, entre otros de la carne del tatú y de la iguana. Toda infracción a los "*tabú*" alimenticios será causa de enfermedades de estómago en el niño. Ciertos "*tabú*" duran de uno a dos años. El marido se abstiene de toda relación sexual con su mujer hasta que la criatura comienza a tener dientes.

Algunas prácticas tienen, a los ojos de los indios el poder de influenciar mágicamente el desarrollo de la criatura. Así, los padres pueden solicitar a una mujer que tiene hermosos cabellos, que se corte un mechón y frote con él la cabeza de su hijita. Un individuo, cuyos miembros son bien proporcionados será solicitado para que dé masajes en las piernas del niño. En general, los padres gustan de que personas bien hechas tomen a su bebé en sus brazos para comunicarle su bella apariencia.

Una mujer no alimenta más que a su criatura y se rehusa a dar el pecho a cualquier otro bebé. Sin embargo, se puede ver, algunas veces, abuelas ancianas dando el seno a un bebé, pero es únicamente para en-

gañar su hambre y no para nutrirlo como algunos lo pretenden. Cuando el niño tiene alrededor de un año, su madre masca granos de maíz hervido e introduce esta pasta, con los dedos, en la boca del pequeño. Para tranquilizar a los bebés, que mi presencia asustaba, las madres no dejan nunca de hacerlos comer. Lo mismo cuando un bebé gritaba en la iglesia: su madre comenzaba por palmearlo gentilmente y hacerle oir unos *hush, hush, hush* para calmarlo, pero si esta medida no tenía efecto le ofrecía su seno.

No recuerdo haber visto a un hombre ni a una mujer maltratar a una criatura. La escena siguiente, que observé en una aldea mataco, puede ser considerada como típica. Un niñito, de alrededor de dos años, gritaba rabiosamente, sin causa aparente. Su madre le hizo saltar sobre sus rodillas, en la esperanza de calmarlo, después le cerró la boca con la mano. Como el pequeño continuaba vociferando y debatiéndose, su madre ensayó arrastrarlo lejos de la choza, pero él se debatía y rodaba. Ella terminó por dominarlo, y sin ninguna brusquedad y sin cesar de reír, fué a depositarlo a algunos metros de la casa, en donde la criatura permaneció gritando sin osar regresar.

Esta misma gentileza y ausencia de brutalidad pueden observarse en los niños que juegan. Así, en numerosas ocasiones, he podido observar niñitos que se disputaban la posesión de una bolilla; se empujaban, se atropellaban, pero nunca con maldad o violencia. La educación Mataco pone el acento sobre la dulzura y la gentileza, y un hombre violento o de mal carácter (*witsax*) les inspira temor y disgusto. Desde su niñez las criaturas aprenden a dividir entre ellas la comida. Cuando yo hacía distribuciones de caramelos, los niños no dejaban nunca de ir a advertir a los ausentes para que ellos pudiesen participar del regalo.

Aborto e infanticidio.

El aborto y el infanticidio eran practicados por los Mataco en gran escala, como entre las otras tribus del Chaco. Según mis informantes, una mujer se hace abortar cuando ella está encinta sin estar casada, cuando ha sido abandonada por su marido o, después de una querella con éste, para vengarse. Muchas mujeres se hacen abortar cuando están

encinta por la primera vez, en la esperanza de que con ello facilitarán las pariciones a venir.

Es una opinión muy extendida en el Chaco la de que las indígenas usan drogas potentes para provocar el aborto, pero se trata, sin duda, de leyendas. Los procedimientos que las mujeres Mataco usan son enteramente mecánicos. Al quinto mes de la concepción, se hacen martillar el abdomen por alguna compañera hasta que la sangre corra.

Matrimonio.

En las relaciones amorosas las jóvenes muestran más iniciativa que los hombres. Fácilmente se manifiestan provocantes y usan de toda clase de artificios y pequeñas estratagemas para inflamar el deseo de los hombres. Es sobre todo en ocasión de las danzas nocturnas que se pueden observar los manejos de esas jovencitas. Los varones jóvenes dan pruebas de mucha más circunspección, y para hacer conocer su pasión recurren a intermediarios. Es así que enviarán a la joven que aman un mensajero portador de una antorcha o de una linterna. Si la joven está de acuerdo no tiene más que seguir al emisario.

No es raro que los padres tomen sobre ellos el arreglo del matrimonio. Si más tarde la unión es desdichada y termina en un divorcio, uno u otro de los cónyuges se consuela diciendo: "yo no deseaba ese matrimonio, mis padres son los responsables".

En general la residencia es matrilocal, es decir, que el marido va a establecerse en casa de los padres de su mujer. Sin embargo, puede ocurrir, sobre todo si la mujer es mayor que el marido, que ella vaya a instalarse en la familia de él. Pero, la residencia patrilocal es muy rara.

Después del nacimiento de un hijo, la nueva pareja puede construírse una casa separada, pero siempre en la aldea de la mujer. Los jóvenes Mataco de la región del Pilcomayo, que se han casado con muchachas del Bermejo, se han establecido, todos, en esta última región.

La residencia matrilocal presenta algunos inconvenientes para el marido. He oído a jóvenes quejarse de esta costumbre. Ellos decían que sus suegros se apoderaban de los productos de sus campos y de su caza. No es raro que un hombre se divorcie de su mujer para escapar de la

tiranía de la familia de ella. Además, los padres de la mujer están siempre dispuestos a volverse contra su yerno si su hija tiene alguna razón para quejarse de él. Una familia saca siempre producto del matrimonio de una de las hijas, que le procura el concurso de un hombre en la flor de la edad.

La poligamia parece haber sido, sobre todo, el atributo de los jefes. En San Patricio había un jefe provisto de tres esposas. El antiguo jefe de San Andrés tenía dos mujeres con las que había tenido cinco hijos.

En caso de adulterio, el marido no la emprende contra la mujer sino que descarga su cólera contra su amante. Puede matarlo u obligarlo a pagarle una indemnización. Así, conozco el caso de un mataco que se apoderó de la carreta de otro hombre acusado de haber tenido relaciones íntimas con su mujer.

Las funciones de jefe

El antiguo jefe de la región de San Andrés, sobre el Pilcomayo, era el famoso cacique Cuchitoro, que recibió del gobierno argentino tres leguas de terreno a lo largo del río. El jefe actual de esa zona es Santiago, que fué designado por los colonos pobladores, que esperaban convertirlo en su servidor. Sin embargo, Santiago permaneció leal a su pueblo.

Las principales funciones del jefe, tal como me han sido descriptas en San Andrés, consisten hoy en representar a la tribu ante los blancos y en arreglar, amistosamente, los conflictos entre las diferentes bandas. Si una muerte ha sido cometida en su grupo, el jefe tiene el deber de exigir a la familia del matador el pago del precio de la sangre. El monto de esa compensación varía según la condición social de la víctima. Si se trata de un viejo caduco la pérdida es considerada sin gran importancia y dos cabras y un viejo fusil son suficientes para restablecer las buenas relaciones entre la banda de la víctima y la del matador. En otros casos, la parte lesionada solicita un caballo, diez cabras, un fusil, etc. Si el precio de la sangre es demasiado elevado, el cacique encargado del asunto puede ir a buscar al jefe del cual depende la familia del muerto y pedirle rebaje sus pretenciones.

Antiguamente la ley del Talión era rigurosamente aplicada. Los indios de San Andrés habían muerto a un hombre de una aldea vecina cuyos habitantes emigraron sobre el Bermejo. Quince años más tarde un sobrino del muerto hizo todo el camino del Bermejo al Pilcomayo para arreglar sus cuentas con los asesinos y mató, a su vez, a uno de los indígenas de la aldea. Luego se volvió al Bermejo sin ser perseguido.

La última guerra indígena tuvo lugar en la región de San Andrés, en 1928. Las gentes de la aldea de San Martín atacaron a los de San Andrés aprovechando la obscuridad de la noche. Se tirotearon hasta la mañana, pero —como ocurre a menudo en estas batallas— nadie fué muerto ni herido. Más tarde, las gentes de Yuto se unieron a las de San Andrés, para atacar a los indígenas de San Martín. Pasaron por la Misión en actitud y traje de guerra, pintados y adornados con plumas. Antes del ataque ejecutaron una danza de guerra en el lecho del Pilcomayo, que entonces estaba en seco. Después, corriéndose por la ribera izquierda, tomaron, a las gentes de San Martín por retaguardia, cortándoles la retirada. Un gran número de estos últimos, en su mayoría mujeres y niños, fueron muertos o heridos. Las gentes de Yuto se llevaron consigo a un niño como prisionero.

Creencias religiosas diversas.

Los más temibles entre los espíritus son los *wilan*, que toman posesión de sus víctimas y los hunden en un estado de locura furiosa. Así, en la Misión de San Patricio una joven quedó súbitamente pálida, con los ojos que le salían de la cabeza. Huyó, corriendo al matorral en donde quedó cuatro días. Los que siguieron su pista me aseguraron que ésta desapareció tan bruscamente como si la muchacha hubiese volado por los aires.

Otra muchacha se levantó de un desvanecimiento, durante el cual cuatro hechiceros la habían cuidado, para anunciar que un espíritu había penetrado en ella.

He aquí un caso que se había producido en San Andrés poco antes de mi llegada. Un mataco se había trasladado a alguna distancia de la aldea a la búsqueda de un caballo. A su vuelta se imaginó ver contra

un árbol un pequeño ser luminoso, del tamaño de una olla, que saltaba de árbol en árbol y que finalmente, desapareció en la maleza. Asustado nuestro indio huyó a la aldea, adonde cayó desvanecido y fué presa de violentas convulsiones. El doctor C. Smith debió darle una inyección de morfina para calmarlo. El indígena se restableció y, algunos días después, se sintió en estado de ir a su campo. Sobre el camino de vuelta tuvo la misma visión y fué presa de iguales perturbaciones. Sus padres, temblando de miedo, fueron a buscar al médico para que él le diese una inyección. Según el doctor C. Smith, esas visiones pueden ser la consecuencia de afecciones renales, que causen en el sujeto ilusiones ópticas, especialmente la aparición de puntos luminosos ante los ojos. También ciertos ruidos extraños y siniestros, que los indígenas Mataco atribuyen a los espíritus son debidos, realmente, a pájaros nocturnos. Y un meteoro, que cayó en el Pilcomayo en ocasión de mi permanencia, me fué explicado por los Mataco como la caída de un anciano de cabellos grises.

Los indios hablan de buena gana de los *lewo*, animales míticos que viven en las lagunas y que tienen la apariencia de serpientes. Su aliento forma el arco iris *(lewo-tutsax* igual a aliento de *lewo)*. Los lewo tienen horror de las mujeres en la época de la menstruación y si una de ellas se aproxima en este estado a un estanque o a un río, ellos suscitan una tempestad.

Los hechiceros.

Los hechiceros obtienen su poder de los espíritus que les enseñan las danzas mágicas. El alma de un hechicero puede ser arrebatada por un *wilan*, o espíritu, y encerrada en un árbol. El espíritu le enseña la lengua de los espíritus y cuando su educación ha terminado, el espíritu sopla sobre el novicio y le confiere el poder de cuidar a los enfermos por el mismo procedimiento, es decir, soplando sobre ellos. Las relaciones entre espíritus y hechiceros son muy frecuentes y tienen lugar durante la noche.

Para sacar el alma de su envoltura corporal y enviarla en misión sobrenatural, los hechiceros aspiran por la nariz un polvo hecho con granos de sebil asados (*Piptadenia* sp.), a la cual agregan, a veces, tabaco pulverizado. Esas aspiraciones les causan un estado de aturdimiento

durante el cual el alma del hechicero abandona su cuerpo y se transforma en insecto o en pájaro —generalmente en *yulo*— y se va a posar en un árbol situado en el medio de un lago. Este árbol está agitado de un movimiento perpetuo y es muy difícil mantenerse en él. Una desgracia sobreviene a aquellos que caen, pues son inmediatamente devorados por las palometas y los cocodrilos que pupulan en el lago. Si son expertos en su arte, los hechiceros se transforman en lagartos y así consiguen mantenerse sobre el árbol. Se supone que cada hechicero posee una rama de ese árbol, que está estrechamente unida a su destino. Tanto como las hojas se mantengan verdes, el hechicero goza de buena salud y no corre ningun peligro, pero tan pronto como la rama se amustia comienza a periclitar.

Los hechiceros pueden predecir el buen y el mal tiempo, con gran anticipación, pues en sus vagabundeos ven las hojas verdes o secas de las buenas y de las malas estaciones del año.

Los hechiceros tienen, también, el poder de transformarse en animales y en fuego que devora las malezas de su camino.

Para echar a las enfermedades, los hechiceros se sirven de pequeñas varitas que les han sido dadas por los espíritus y usan, también, las alas de diferentes pájaros *(yulo, carancho)*.

Los animales pueden, tanto como los hombres, ser objeto del tratamiento de los hechiceros. Un informante me describió la cura de un caballo. Primero el hechicero recitó un encantamiento, después se puso a succión la grupa del caballo hasta que hubo retirado una maderita, que dijo era la causa del mal.

Algunos hechiceros son eminentemente peligrosos. Comienzan por devorar perros; después atacan a los hombres. Es casi imposible poner término a su carrera criminal, pues si se los mata resucitan y si se los quema vuelven sobre la tierra.

Algunas mujeres pueden convertirse en hechiceras, aunque gozan de mucho menos crédito que los hombres. Su vocación se manifiesta por los signos siguientes: pasan horas acurrucadas en tierra sin dejar de balancearse, finalmente buscan de huir a la maleza y su fuerza es tal que varios hombres no alcanzan a retenerlos. Una vez allí, se arrancan sus

vestidos y trepan sobre un árbol en el que permanecen varios días balanceándose y cantando.

Magia.

Los Mataco de San Andrés se quejan amargamente de que sus vecinos, los Toba del Pilcomayo, sean grandes hechiceros. En ocasión de mi estada en esa aldea, un Toba llegó a visitar a uno de sus amigos. No encontrándolo en la casa, recorrió varias chozas en la esperanza de encontrarlo. Cuando se fué los Mataco lo acusaron de hechicería y dijeron que sus idas y venidas no tenían otro fin más que el de apoderarse de sus pertenencias (cabellos, cortes de uñas, pedazos de tejidos, etc.), de las gentes que había visitado. La verdad es que muchas personas en cuyas casas el Toba había entrado se enfermaron, lo que no hizo más que confirmar las sospechas de los Mataco. Sin embargo, ninguna sanción se produjo contra el supuesto criminal.

Ritos funerarios.

Si se fijan los ojos de un moribundo, su alma no puede escaparse y su agonía se prolonga. Es por ello que los Mataco cubren la cara de los agonizantes con un pedazo de género que anudan alrededor de su cuello. A menudo esa tela contribuye a acelerar su fin, sofocándolos. Su apuro por enterrar los muertos es tan grande que les llega a ocurrir al enterrar individuos aun con vida.

La viuda, con la cabeza rapada, es aislada en un rincón de la choza, separada del resto de la habitación por una cortina o es colocada en un pequeño anexo, agregado a la choza.

Inmediatamente después de la muerte de un joven, que se había suicidado en la aldea de San Patricio, su madre se acurrucó en tierra, colocando la cabeza del muerto sobre sus rodillas y se puso a lamentarse, pronunciando constantemente la palabra *yos, yos* (mi hijo, mi hijo). El padre batió el tambor, durante un día y una noche, para acompañar una melopea en la que la expresión *yos, yos,* reaparecía a cada instante. Un grupo de mujeres, bajo la dirección de la madre, que sacudía un sonajero,

ejecutaron una danza, consistente en pequeños pasos saltados, cerca del sitio en donde el cadáver había sido depositado antes del entierro.

Un viudo o una viuda pueden volverse a casar a los dos o tres meses después de la muerte de su cónyuge. Las mujeres se excusan, diciendo: "Tenía que comer, tengo necesidad de alguien que me dé ropa".

El entierro en los árboles, descripto por Enrique Palavecino, era antiguamente muy común en la región media del Bermejo.

Creencias en la realidad de los sueños.

El misionero Barbrooke Grubb ha dado numerosos ejemplos de la creencia de los Lengua en la realidad de los sueños. Yo mismo he recogido numerosos ejemplos de esta fe entre los Toba y los Pilagá. He aquí una anécdota que ilustra esta actitud entre los Mataco. Una muchacha de la aldea de San Patricio se despertó llorando una hermosa mañana. Como se le preguntara la causa de su dolor, contestó que había soñado tener relaciones sexuales con un joven y que temía quedar embarazada...

(Enviado desde el Smithsonian Institute, de Washington, por su autor, socio correspondiente. Traducido del francés por el consocio doctor Fernando Márquez Miranda).

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FOLK

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Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *cavaguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aloja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *awatsha;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

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584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutiklil*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *sawaklawik*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
[534] and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies
583 down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence inti-
836 mate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit
[582] the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

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Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *caraguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

[222]
[415]

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582 583 836 the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl [415] has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will [482] leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [541] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realised that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [847] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *anutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
867 will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter
606 of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say,
[182] but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

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837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconacious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom [586] does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to [822] find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

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family will then be sent to the killer's village to ask whether the murdered woman's husband was at home the night before. If the answer is negative the murderer is known, and the families of the two victims will take up their arms and prepare to attack the killer's village. However, this was often merely a move undertaken to ensure the payment of blood money, compensation for the two lives, by the murderer's family.

Another example of the fatal results of a woman's infidelity is bound up in a custom that clearly shows the cruelty that formerly prevailed among the Mataco. If a man discovered that his wife had a lover, he could pretend ignorance and privately watch their habits and meeting place. One day he would follow his wife and wait in hiding until he could surprise the pair asleep. First he would kill his rival with an arrow, and then overpower the wife and cut her throat. He then dragged her out on to the path with legs far apart, slit up her stomach and lay her lover on top. The husband then crept back to his hut, seating himself at the fire with his bow and arrow in his hand waiting to see what would happen. Someone would soon come by the scene of the crime and come running back to the village, whereupon the man fled into the forest. As he could not be found a start was made with burying the two victims. In the meantime the murderer had crept close in and could hear what the wife's family said about him. At the moment they lowered the wife's corpse into the grave, and all eyes were looking down, the man shot one more arrow, killing the brother of the murdered woman. He then fled at great speed, reached his village and informed his family of the slaughter of the three persons. Both his father's and his mother's bands then armed themselves, and shortly afterwards the bands connected with the wife and the rival arrived to attack the village. This case is not merely a story, but a typical instance showing how adultery with the Mataco frequently leads to homicide and blood feuds between different bands.

Unfaithfulness is one of the chief reasons for divorce, which is a quite frequent occurrence with the Mataco. If on account of infidelity a man is divorced from his wife, he himself leaves the house taking with him only his personal effects such as fishing net, tinder, bow and arrow etc. He moves first to his parents' house, and later to the family of his new wife. Under these circumstances he cannot take his children with him unless they are so big that they themselves desire it. If the woman's unfaithfulness is the cause of the divorce, she will be evicted from the house, and not until later will her family come and fetch her personal property such as clay vessels, *yicat*, harvest of forest fruit, plus any goats and sheep. The children then stay with the father and can be brought up by his mother or some other female relative. It is always a general rule that at divorces the injured party retains house and children, and only the personal property is divided. However, it is not always that things go according to rule. Often, for example, an injured woman and her mother will visit her divorced husband's new house when he is away, remove his personal things and perhaps burn down the house.

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586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognised is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both [587] morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can [589] only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. [682] Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of house and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

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of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognised by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

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University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

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Suicide Among the Matako of the Argentine Gran Chaco

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Sumario

La facilidad con que los Indios Matako del Gran Chaco argentino se suicidan es un fenómeno sociológico de sumo interés y que merece nuestra atención. Los suicidios en esta tribu asumen frecuentemente el carácter de una epidemia y han causado grandes preocupaciones a los misioneros británicos que han tomado a estos Indios bajo su protección. El suicidio entre los Matako afecta una forma estrictamente definida por la tradición. Estos Indios se envenenan con las frutas de la sachasandia (CAPPARIS SALICIFOLIA, GRISEB), un árbol común en el Chaco. Esta misma fruta secada y hervida en seis o siete aguas constituye un alimento de cierta importancia durante los meses de carestía en el invierno. Los síntomas del envenenamiento son fáciles de diagnosticar y, si el caso es tratado a tiempo, la muerte puede evitarse mediante inyecciones de morfina o la absorción de un emético. Los que realmente comen las frutas de la sachasandia con la intención de morir lo hacen con mucho sigilo y toman sus disposiciones para que los síntomas se manifiesten durante la noche cuando nadie los pueda observar y prestar ayuda. En general, despechos amorosos, incompatibilidad de humor entre gente casada y frustración sexual parecen ser la causa directa de estos suicidios. Son muy comunes en la época del año cuando los jóvenes se reúnen al anochecer para bailar y cuando se inician la mayor parte de las intrigas amorosas. La relación entre el número de suicidios y los bailes nativos fué observada por los misioneros que trataron de combatir el mal prohibiendo las danzas, y persuadiendo a los neófitos que los bailes nativos eran malos bajo todos los aspectos. Sin embargo se han notado también muchos casos de suicidios entre los niños que van a la escuela misionera, a raíz de una amonestación del maestro. Los misioneros tienen la impresión que el suicidio es tan común entre los hombres como entre las mujeres, tal vez con cierta preponderancia entre los primeros. Por lo general son los jóvenes quienes atentan a su vida. Estas epidemias de suicidio no son cosa nueva entre los Indios, pero los misioneros aseguran que el número de suicidios aumentó cuando iniciaron su obra en la región.

Hay en estos suicidios un elemento de exhibicionismo y de ostentación. Muchas de las presuntas víctimas no toman una dosis de veneno suficiente para causar la muerte y otras simulan los síntomas. No cabe duda que el suicidio tiene un fuerte carácter agresivo. Muchos individuos usan del suicidio como de una arma; al matarse uno se venga de quien lo ofendió. A pesar de que en la vida diaria no se notan tendencias agresivas, no se puede dudar que haya un estado de agresión latente dentro de la comunidad. Estas tendencias agresivas se manifestaban antaño en partidas de hockey, en las borracheras colectivas, en la práctica de la hechicería y por supuesto en la guerra. Hoy en día no existen estos desahogos, ya que todas las actividades que daban cierto sabor a la vida han desaparecido o están prohibidas por los misioneros. El suicidio puede ser una vía de escape para

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estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

767 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the [197] English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins [115] Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the [824] fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of 262 suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in 251 the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and 252 before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, 762 foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes 764 jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

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and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizzines increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

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naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered. According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

Third case. A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was discovered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

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forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary

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159 762 together with his people but, after some difficulties with his young wife, took poison and died.

Ninth case. Martin, a 15 year old boy, was the kitchen boy of the mission and had always been a cheerful and willing worker. One day he told the missionary that he was married. From that time on, he looked troubled and became restless. Later the missionary was told that Martin did not like the girl with whom he lived but that the girl, who had a forceful character, would not permit him to leave her. Finally, depressed and broken, Martin told the missionary about his unhappy situation. He was advised to separate from his wife and determined to do so. Despite this resolution, he remained with her; to excuse himself he explained that every time he wanted to tell her to go away, "he would become weak all over and could say nothing". His own words were, "Then I go all weak and sleep with her".

The quarreling continued and things went from bad to worse. About this time Martin and his brother killed a cow that belonged to a white settler. The missionary, of course, learned about the theft. Knowing that the missionary would be angry, Martin left the kitchen and refused to return. In a state of utter dejection, he took poison but was saved by the missionary.

Two or three days later, during a quarrel over some meat, his elder brother struck him in the face. Angry and humiliated by the blow, the boy went to the forest and secretly ate sachasandia. In the evening he returned to the missionary who only noticed that one of his eyes was swollen and badly bruised. He was more depressed than ever and sighed on and on. Finally he took the missionary's hand, said goodby and, with another sigh, went home. When the missionary was called to his bedside, it was too late. He died the same night.

Martin had re-married a few days before his death. His new wife was a nice girl of about 14 years. She discovered his condition early in the night and tried to persuade his father to fetch the missionary. The old man slept on and paid no attention. When it was already too late, the boy's mother asked for help, but the father remained indifferent throughout. The moment the boy was dead, his mother squatted down, laid his head on her knees and started the death wailing, "My [764] son, my son, my son...". The other women joined in the lament. The next day the father beat his drum without stopping.

Tenth case. This attempt at suicide was made by an old woman of some 50 years, who had grown children and grandchildren. One of her sons was Martin, whose death was described above.

One afternoon, when she had mourned for her son for many days, she took poison. Evidently she was very tired and depressed. Her

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family suspected that she had taken the fruit although she showed none of the usual symptoms. One of her sons asked the missionary for help. As soon as she realized she had been discovered, she jumped up and vehemently denied having taken poison. The son insisted that she had and that she was trying to deceive her family and the missionary. To make sure that she was in no danger, the missionary decided to give her an emetic. The old woman struggled violently, throwing off everyone who approached her; only after an hour's strenuous fight was she overcome and forced to take the purge. Of course her stomach contained large quantities of the poison, which she had timed very carefully to take effect early in the morning when everyone would be deep in sleep and, therefore, unaware of her condition. Had it not been for her son's persistence, she undoubtedly would have been found dead the next day. Her husband, who was devoted to her, appeared to be quite unconcerned and, had the matter been left with him, would have done nothing to save her.

In general, love affairs are said to be the main cause of these suicides. They are particularly frequent on the occasions of the nightly dances which are closely connected with the sexual life of the Matako and at such times may take epidemic proportions. A young man will take poison for some reason and soon after others follow suit. Asked why they try to kill themselves, they explain that they feel compelled to do so by some superior force. The fruit attracts them; the desire to eat it becomes an obsession. When they walk in the bush their attention becomes riveted upon the fruit, which they see everywhere, until the temptation becomes too strong and they eat it.

Young boys at school are quite likely to take poison when they have been scolded by their teacher. For this reason the missionaries must exercise particular care to avoid offense when the poisonous fruit is ripe and, consequently, especially dangerous.

Actually there is a great deal of ostentation in these suicides. It is likely that many who take poison, do not take a fatal dose. Those who really wish to die generally take the poison secretly and try to conceal the fact until it is too late to help them. The others, on the contrary, boast about what they have done and are willing, even eager to get medical treatment.

This mania also has its simulators and fakers. Certain individuals imitate all the clinical symptoms, —convulsions, foaming, etc.— without having tasted the deadly fruit. Here again the desire to show off, to be the center of attention is foremost. Every suicide attempt provokes turmoil in the village and everyone flocks to the house where

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the victim awaits death. It is said that some men take poison to blackmail a woman into complying with their wishes.

It has been noticed time and again that only young people eat sachasandia as a rule. Among the cases cited above there is only one of an elderly woman who attempted to take her life. In this connection, the question arises of whether suicides are more common among women than among men. No data on this point have been gathered, but it is the impression of the missionaries that suicide is equally common among men and women with perhaps a slight majority among women. The first problem raised by the frequency of these suicides is whether the suicides are caused by new conditions of life —by culture clash and lack, of adjustment to a new world— or whether they were equally frequent formerly when the native culture still functioned? Since no Matako group now lives in its earlier surroundings, the truth of the matter will be difficult to learn. If the problem is presented to the missionaries who are largely responsible for the disappearance of the Indian culture, they always insist that suicides were one of the worst manifestations of the culture before the Indians were saved. They point out, moreover, that the number of suicides was particularly high at the time when the missionaries began their work in the region, and they establish a close relation between suicide and dancing. One of the missionaries wrote to me: "In the old days when the Indians were still dancing, there used to be as many as a dozen attempted suicides in one day, resulting in my being up most of the night going from one to another. They were so many and so frequent, however, and it happened so long ago that I can remember none in detail". This evidence is confirmed by other missionaries who recall that the worst epidemics always occured in connection with the night dances which have a decidedly sexual character. At such times young married men who took part in the entertainments slept with girls, thus arousing the jealousy of their wives and the anger of their mothers-in law. If as a result one or two people committed suicide, others would follow their example.

The link established between night dances and suicide was the main reason for the strict tabu against dancing which is now enforced in every mission. Indians have been made so aware of the evil of dancing that even little girls have been kept from their normal and charming jumping about. Missionaries, however, are not responsible for this measure; it has been self-imposed by the Indians.

No cases of suicide are known among other tribes who live in the same region and under similar conditions. At any rate, I have never

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been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsble for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

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terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

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most that can be said is that the mania found a suitable climate for continuation in that atmosphere of disintegration and pessimism. It must be remembered that similar crises have been observed from the very beginning of the missionary era. It may well be, therefore, that suicide was an institutionalized form of protest under the conditions of the earlier culture undertaken for some concrete reason by one individual who could not otherwise effectively punish members of the ingroup, and followed by others whose desires were kindled by the first example.

Suicides seem to have occurred with relative frequency among the Kaingang who were gathered on a reservation in the State of Sao Paulo. Since in certain cases they seem to have been caused by analogous situations to those found among the Matako, the following passage by Manizer may be of interest: "Suicides caused by family quarrels are very common. I know of several cases: Cagndiri attempted to hang herself because of some affair with her husband's brother; for that reason she was expelled from home. Vangrikuiix tried to hang herself when her husband planned to abandon her. Naxo's wife hanged herself to death because of an affair with her husband's brother, quite a young man. Old Karege's son killed himself by hanging after a quarrel with his wife who had refused to eat palmito which he had brought back trom the forest. There were two other cases of suicide during the two years the Kaingang were under supervision."[1]

The cases of suicide among South American natives listed by Wisse, in his book "Selbstmord und Todesfurcht bei den Naturvolkern" (Zutphen, 1933) are based on vague references in the travel literature of the last century and as a rule are valueless for science.

[1] Les Kaingangs, 23th International Congress of Americanists, New York, 1928, p. 760-761.

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Ceremonies for the Expulsion of Illnesses among the Mataco

[Les Cérémonies d'Expulsion des Maladies chez les Matako]

Élisabeth Dijour

Paris, 1933

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Translated from the French by Priscilla Reynolds

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [242] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/212 cont./

755 The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical
756 to the one the medicine men make heard during the treatment
783 of illnesses. The singing was given rhythm by the rattling of
786 the maracas, and, from time to time, by the sound of the bands of rattles and hoofs and blasts of the whistles. Each whistle blast marks a new stage in the performances connected with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine man, as well as his arrival or departure from a given place). The maraca was sometimes held in a threatening manner as if to repulse an invisible being; the same gesture was made by those who held ostrich feathers. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, one or another of the officiants took the ha'tax powder. One of the officiants ran behind and in front of his colleagues, dusting them from head to toe with a feather in his hand; he was assisted by another man, who made the rattles and little bells on their backs jingle. After having taken some ha'tax the officiants began to sing again, to brandish their maracas, and to make threatening gestures with them or with the feathers. Some medicine men were singing the song appropriate for their spirits, without concerning themselves with the recitative chants of their confreres.

The direct offensive against the illness followed these preliminaries: some individuals stopped out of the row, brandishing their maracas and feathers violently, and then returned to their places. Another began to throw up some dirt with his foot and was immediately followed by another who, seizing handfuls of dust, threw it in front of himself. Then one of them unsheathed his liana-cutter and began to cut the grass around him; his example was followed by almost the entire group, which threw itself into the assault on the illness. Some obstinately set upon one spot, as if they had at last driven the enemy into a corner, and beat it with redoubled blows of their liana-cutters or feather brooms, and then stamped on it as though they were burying their victim. The attack on the illness lasted rather long and was executed with great seriousness.

/212 cont./

755 756 743 746 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164 231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mɨsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/214 cont./

755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was [533] [535] resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[774] [776] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

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(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

/214 cont./

755 554 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments. [292] [301] [302] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in 755 554 535 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine 755 554 men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

/215 cont./

755 The whole ceremony lasted from March 20 to March 24,
554 every day from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. and from 8 to 10 P.M.
Each day at the end of the ceremony a shot was fired to frighten the illness.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(March 26, 1933)

755 On March 26 another woman who had the same symptoms of illness as the preceding one was treated in the following manner: the site already described was used, but the flag was replaced by a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers, and a thick tuft of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the post. The staff was decorated with ritual belts. Offerings of the same type as those for the preceding ceremony were placed on the crossbars which separated the tent from the village.
755 During the entire ceremony the sick woman remained seated
535 /216/ on a bale of hay in the center of the tent; right next to her were four of the great medicine men, a little farther away about ten young dancers, and then a final circle of six or seven women. All the officiants, adorned as usual with feathers, ritual belts, and little bells, danced and sang. A passage was
[123] contrived in the separating crossbars, and, as I insisted on it, a medicine man came to tell me that this opening was intended to let the illness out; I asked him if my presence would prevent it from going out; he told me no, but that I was running the risk that it would enter me at the moment it left the body of the sick woman.

The dance was halted at a sign from the chief medicine man, and two men, taking a poncho, striped red and white, by its ends, began to dance, jumping sideways, legs open; then

/216 cont./

[755 535] they approached the sick woman and passed the poncho over her head; next they ran to the exit and shook it. They repeated this maneuver several times, then completely enveloped the woman in the poncho, and a medicine man began to rub her through the cloth. Everyone was singing but some were not dancing. After some time the poncho was taken off, carried at a running pace to the exit, and thrown outside. The dance was resumed; an assistant threw some water on the ground, and the chief medicine man then stopped the dance again. He sat next to the sick woman, covering himself completely with a large black blanket, and began to speak with the illness; during this time the man who was watering the ground carried up a bucket of water and, with the help of a medicine man, washed the face, head, and body of the sick woman, who was turned with her feet toward the passage made in the crossbars, and a path was traced with water from her feet to the passage. The chief medicine man got up and the dance was resumed with renewed ardor. During this dance the assistant moistened the shoulders [302] of the male dancers, while an old man painted the faces of the women red, giving them two circles on the cheek bones and a streak along the nose. At the same time one medicine man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a red cloth. At the end of a certain time the sick woman lay down, the dance continued, taking on a threatening character, and then suddenly the people appeared satisfied, having undoubtedly obtained a momentary success. The ceremony stopped and was resumed after an hour.

Note

[164 132] According to the medicine men with whom I had a chance to talk about these two sick women, they were suffering from "sickness in the chest," /217/ easily explicable by a sharp atmospheric drop of almost 25° in 24 hours.

/217 cont./

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [554] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned with what was going on. After an interruption, during which [213] everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [152] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

/217 cont./

Notes

753 755 843 1. This woman, who was about seven months pregnant, continued to carry enormous loads of dry wood, which provoked the illness to which she succumbed.

[761] 2. According to the opinion of the village, the death was due to the fact that she had become pregnant before her first child knew how to feed itself.

Plate VIII

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A. The medicine men sing to the rhythm of the maracas.

B. Threats by the medicine men; a whistle announcing a transformation.

[End Plate 1]

Plate IX

755
756
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[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]

7: Dijour SI7 Mataco

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[Title Page]

[P.241]

LES CÉRÉMONIES D'EXPULSION DES MALADIES CHEZ LES MATAKO,

PAR ÉLISABETH DIJOUR.

(*Planches VIII-IX*).

Au cours de la mission dans le Chaco argentin, dont j'ai été chargée en 1932-1933, j'ai eu l'occasion d'assister à un certain nombre de cérémonies d'expulsion de maladies ou de mauvais esprits.

Les Indiens Matako ne semblent pas connaître d'autre médecine que la médecine magique ; cela est normal puisque la maladie prend l'image du malade et non son corps.

Parmi les cérémonies décrites ci-dessous, on peut distinguer celles dont bénéficie le village entier et celles dont ne bénéficie qu'un seul malade.

Cérémonie d'expulsion des maladies pour tout le village. (8 avril 1933).

Cette cérémonie eut lieu le matin, en plein air, assez loin des maisons, et fut exécutée par la totalité des medicine-men du village. Ils étaient disposés sur un rang, la face vers l'Est et tous avaient en main une maraca et un sifflet en os. Certains d'entre eux portaient des bandes de grelots, soit à la main, soit passées en sautoir ou accrochées aux coudes. Quelques officiants étaient vêtus de chemises cérémonielles en laine rouge, pailletées de rondelles de coquillages, d'autres de chemises de guerre en fil de curaguata. Presque tous portaient des bandeaux frontaux rouges ornés de plumes ou des chapeaux agrémentés de plumes d'autruche, et la plupart avaient un bouquet de plumes d'autruche à la main. Le visage des principaux medicine-men était barbouillé de rouge et de noir, et celui des femmes de rouge. En face de la rangée des officiants, étaient plantées, pointe en bas, quelques flèches et une lance la pointe en haut. Au cours de la cérémonie, on fixa au sommet de la lance un bouquet de plumes d'autruche. Lorsque j'arrivai sur les lieux, je remarquai un jeune

homme en train de moudre dans une calebasse les graines du *ha'tax*, que priseraient plus tard les medicine-men.

La cérémonie consistait en un chant sans paroles, identique à celui que les medicine-men font entendre lors du traitement des maladies. Le chant était rythmé par le tintement des maraca et, par moments, par le son des bandes de grelots et de sabots et des coups de sifflet. Chaque coup de sifflet marque un stade nouveau dans les représentations associées à la cérémonie (métamorphose nouvelle de l'esprit du medicine-man, aussi bien que son arrivée ou son départ d'un lieu donné). La maraca était parfois tendue d'une manière menaçante, comme pour refouler un être invisible ; le même geste était fait par ceux qui tenaient des plumes d'autruche. A tour de rôle, sans que pour cela la cérémonie fût interrompue, l'un ou l'autre des officiants prisait la poudre de *ha'tax*. Un des officiants courait derrière et devant ses collègues, un plumeau à la main, et les époussetait de la tête aux pieds ; il était secondé par un autre, qui faisait tinter des grelots et des clochettes dans leur dos. Après avoir prisé du *ha'tax*, les officiants se remettaient à chanter, à brandir leurs maraca et à exécuter avec elles ou avec des plumes des gestes de menace. Quelques medicine-men faisaient entendre le chant propre à leur esprit, sans se soucier de la mélopée de leurs confrères.

A ces préliminaires succéda l'offensive directe contre la maladie : quelques individus sortirent du rang en brandissant violemment leurs maraca et leurs plumes, puis retournèrent à leur place. Un autre commença à projeter de la terre avec le pied, il fut immédiatement suivi par un autre, qui, saisissant à pleines mains la poussière, la jetait devant lui. Puis l'un d'eux dégaina son coupe-liane et se mit à sabrer l'herbe autour de lui ; son exemple fut suivi par presque tout le groupe, qui se lança à l'assaut de la maladie. Quelques-uns s'acharnaient sur un endroit, comme s'ils avaient enfin acculé l'ennemi, et le frappaient à coups redoublés de coupe-liane ou de plumeau, puis piétinaient comme s'ils ensevelissaient leur victime. L'attaque de la maladie dura assez longtemps et fut exécutée avec un très grand sérieux.

La suite de la cérémonie fut ce que nous pourrions appeler une désinfection générale. Les medicine-men commencèrent par s'épousseter entre eux, à faire tinter leurs grelots tout contre le corps de leurs collègues et à leur souffler sur le sommet de la tête ou sur la nuque, comme en cas de maladie. Puis on appela tous ceux, hommes, femmes et enfants, qui avaient assisté à la cérémonie en spectateurs. Ils s'assirent et les medicine-men et medicine-women vinrent leur passer le plumeau sur le corps, leur souffler sur la tête et faire tinter les grelots le long du corps. Ces rites furent accomplis pour les enfants avec le même scrupule que pour les adultes.

Mon ami Sanchez fut l'objet de soins particuliers ; après que le medicine-man chef en personne lui eut soufflé dessus, il fut assisté par quatre medicine-men, dont deux soufflaient et chantaient sur lui, tandis que les deux autres agitaient grelots, cloches et maraca.

Ceux des medicine-men qui n'étaient pas occupés à la désinfection firent demi-tour et répétèrent tous les gestes qu'ils avaient effectués précédemment. De temps en temps, l'un ou l'autre quittait encore le rang pour faucher l'herbe et ensevelir rageusement la maladie. Les coups de sifflet se succédaient à intervalles de plus en plus rapprochés et les grelots étaient agités avec plus d'énergie et d'insistance.

La cérémonie prit fin lorsque tous les membres de la communauté furent censés débarrassés des mauvaises influences dont ils étaient imprégnés.

Notes.

1. La maladie à expulser était la fièvre aphteuse, dont le bétail était alors affecté, et qui avait eu sur la santé des individus des conséquences néfastes. Plusieurs, qui avaient mangé de la viande contaminée, étaient tombés malades.

2. Les medicine-men avaient transformé leur « image » (esprit) en *istí'n*, un oiseau de proie, afin d'aller trouver la maladie, mais comme en cette occasion celle-ci s'était manifestée particulièrement maligne, cette première tentative de conciliation avait échoué, et les hommes durent se transformer en *mɔsɔ'*, abeille de terre.

Cérémonie d'expulsion de maladie au bénéfice d'une personne. (24 janvier 1933).

Dans le petit village voisin, un homme fut pris par le *nalɔ'le*. Vers 21 heures, il fut habillé de rouge et de blanc et assis au centre de la place des cérémonies ; on lui donna deux cloches. En face du malade, on planta dans le sol trois bâtons, l'un de deux mètres environ était entièrement recouvert d'un tissu foncé, les deux autres étaient hauts de 75 à 85 cm. et à leur partie supérieure, surmontée de touffes de plumes d'autruche, des morceaux de tissu étaient attachés. Les deux medicine-men, habillés seulement de ceintures de plumes d'autruche et tenant des grelots en fer à la main, se trouvaient à côté du malade. Un peu plus loin étaient les deux assistants (probablement membres de la famille du malade) et les trois danseurs ; tous portaient des grelots.

Les medicine-men chantaient et soufflaient sur le malade, qui agitait ses cloches, tandis que les danseurs et les assistants piétinaient sur place en

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faisant sonner leurs grelots. Les danseurs se mirent ensuite à courir autour du groupe de la manière suivante : ils partirent de gauche à droite en tournant le dos aux bâtons ; arrivés à la hauteur de ceux-ci au second tour, ils changèrent de sens et continuèrent ainsi, faisant alternativement deux tours dans chaque sens, pendant que les assistants frappaient du pied et chantaient en faisant sonner leurs grelots et que les medicine-men continuaient à chanter et à souffler. Le malade était resté immobile pendant ce temps. Après une dizaine de tours, les danseurs allèrent se reposer en fumant et parlant avec les assistants, tandis que les medicine-men ne cessaient de chanter et d'agiter leurs grelots, le malade restant toujours immobile. La danse fut reprise au bout d'un quart d'heure, accompagnée cette fois-ci par les grelots et le chant de tous les officiants et par les cloches du malade. Les participants avaient l'air assez joyeux. La cérémonie terminée, tout le monde s'assit et se mit à fumer. Puis on emporta les bâtons et on commença à enlever les ornements, d'abord ceux des medicine-men, puis ceux des assistants et danseurs, et en dernier lieu ceux du malade, qui s'en alla tranquillement vers sa hutte.

Note.

naLa'le est un esprit, qui habite sous la terre et qui vole l'image des gens. Parfois ceux qu'il a pris ainsi deviennent des medicine-men.

Cérémonie d'expulsion de maladie au bénéfice d'une personne.
(du 20 au 24 mars 1933).

Une femme, étant très malade et disposant de beaucoup de richesses, fut traitée par cinq grands medicine-men de la région.

Aux alentours de la maison qu'elle habitait, on nettoya un terrain de 5 mètres carrés environ, on y planta des montants de bois et on y dressa une espèce de tente ; l'un des montants, de 6 mètres environ, était décoré de deux grandes pièces de tissu et d'un vieux drapeau argentin. Autour de la tente on disposa des objets demandés par la maladie ou propres à lui plaire : une moustiquaire tendue, un poncho sur un métier à tisser, une vieille valise, des tissus aux couleurs criardes, une selle, une capote militaire, une lampe-tempête, une lance et un fusil. Un peu plus loin on prépara des feux pour la cuisson des aliments destinés à la maladie et un baquet d'eau pour les danseurs. La malade se trouvait assise au milieu de la tente sur une botte de foin et de vieux tissus, vêtue de ses plus beaux habits et couverte d'ornements rituels. Les cinq medicine-men étaient également ornés : ils portaient des ceintures de plumes, des grelots, des casques

coloniaux et autres objets précieux ; toute la partie inférieure de leur visage était barbouillée de noir. Il y avait également une vingtaine de danseurs, affublés de plumes, de ceintures rouges ornées de coquilles, de grelots, de casquettes, de tissus rouges, de sifflets et de vieilles montres cassées ; une dizaine de vieilles femmes couraient autour avec des morceaux de tissu en main et l'une d'elles avec un parapluie. Tout le monde y compris la malade dansait en chantant, parfois les medicine-men et la malade s'arrêtaient, les medicine-men soufflaient sur elle, puis la danse reprenait. Au bout de quelque temps, le medicine-man chef siffla sur sa flûte d'os et la danse s'arrêta net. La malade dansa seule en soulevant lentement un pied, puis l'autre, à trois ou quatre centimètres du sol et en restant sur place ; pendant ce temps, deux medicine-men faisaient sonner les grelots, un homme tapait dans ses mains en riant et un autre secouait deux bouteilles plates en fer-blanc — dans lesquelles on vend la poudre, dans l'intérieur de l'Argentine — remplies de graines ; cela dura une dizaine de minutes, puis les medicine-men participèrent à la danse, mais pendant peu de temps. Après un arrêt, deux d'entre eux s'approchèrent de la malade et se mirent à la dévêtir ; pendant ce temps un medicine-man secouait ses grelots le long du corps de la femme, en commençant par la tête. Lentement tous les ornements furent enlevés, les assistants tapèrent le sol à l'endroit où ils étaient tombés, puis en courant ils allèrent les jeter dehors ; les ayant ramassés, ils les secouèrent à plusieurs reprises, puis les rangèrent soigneusement. La malade fut assise au milieu de la tente et on lui donna à boire. La cérémonie fut interrompue puis reprise.

L'ensemble de la cérémonie dura du 20 au 24 mars, tous les jours de 8 à 11 heures et de 20 à 22 heures.

Tous les jours à la fin de la cérémonie on tirait un coup de feu pour effrayer la maladie.

Cérémonie d'expulsion de maladie au bénéfice d'une personne. (26 mars 1933).

Le 26 mars, une autre femme, qui présentait les mêmes symptômes de maladie que la précédente, fut traitée de la manière suivante : on profita de l'emplacement déjà décrit, mais on remplaça le drapeau par un grand morceau de tissu rouge à fleurs bleues, et on fixa en haut du montant une grosse touffe de plumes d'autruche. La hampe était décorée de ceintures rituelles. Sur les traverses qui séparaient la tente du village on disposa des offrandes du même type que celles de la cérémonie précédente. Pendant tout le temps de la cérémonie la malade resta assise

sur une botte de foin au centre de la tente ; tout près d'elle se trouvaient quatre des grands medicine-men, un peu plus loin une dizaine de jeunes danseurs, puis un dernier cercle de six ou sept femmes. Tous les officiants ornés, comme d'habitude, de plumes, de ceintures rituelles et de clochettes dansaient en chantant. Un passage fut pratiqué dans les traverses de séparation, et comme je m'y tenais, un medicine-man vint me dire que cette ouverture était destinée à laisser passer la maladie ; je lui demandai si ma présence l'empêcherait de sortir ; il me répondit que non, mais que je courais le risque qu'elle n'entrât en moi au moment où elle quitterait le corps de la malade.

La danse fut arrêtée sur un signe du medicine-man chef, et deux hommes, prenant un poncho rayé de rouge et de blanc par les extrémités, se mirent à danser en sautant de côté, les jambes écartées, puis ils s'approchèrent de la malade et passèrent le poncho au-dessus de sa tête, ensuite ils coururent jusqu'à la sortie et le secouèrent. Ils répétèrent cette manœuvre à plusieurs reprises, puis enveloppèrent complètement la femme dans le poncho, et un medicine-man se mit à la frotter à travers le tissu. Tout le monde chantait, mais certains ne dansaient pas. Au bout d'un certain temps, le poncho fut enlevé, porté en courant jusqu'à la sortie et jeté dehors. La danse reprit ; un assistant jeta de l'eau par terre, puis le medicine-man chef arrêta encore une fois la danse. Il s'assit à côté de la malade, en se couvrant complètement d'une grande couverture noire et se mit à parler avec la maladie ; pendant ce temps l'homme qui arrosait le sol apporta un baquet d'eau et, avec l'aide d'un medicine-man, lava la figure, la tête et le corps de la malade, qui fut tournée les pieds vers le passage ménagé dans les traverses et on traça avec de l'eau un chemin, de ses pieds jusqu'à ce passage. Le medicine-man chef se leva et la danse reprit de plus belle. Pendant cette danse l'assistant mouilla les épaules des danseurs mâles, tandis qu'un vieillard peignait en rouge les figures des femmes, en leur faisant deux ronds sur les pommettes et un trait le long du nez. En même temps, un medicine-man soufflait sur la malade et un autre lui couvrait la figure d'un tissu rouge. Au bout d'un certain temps la malade se coucha, la danse continua prenant un caractère de menace, puis tout d'un coup les gens eurent l'air satisfait ayant sans doute obtenu un succès momentané. La cérémonie s'arrêta et fut reprise au bout d'une heure.

Note.

Selon les medicine-men, avec lesquels j'ai eu l'occasion de parler de ces deux malades, elles souffraient du « mal dans la poitrine », faci-

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lement explicable par une brusque chute atmosphérique de presque 25° en 24 heures.

Cérémonie d'expulsion de maladie au bénéfice d'une personne. (2 avril 1933).

Une femme étant malade, on la soigna, mais comme elle était moins riche, la cérémonie eut un caractère plus modeste. En face de la maison de la malade, on dressa une tente, sous laquelle on la coucha. Les offrandes comprenaient seulement des tissus et des sacs en ficelle. A mon arrivée le medicine-man chef était en train de parler avec la maladie, tandis qu'une vieille femme, également medicine-woman, chantait et soufflait sur la malade. Les autres parlaient entre eux, sans avoir l'air de se préoccuper beaucoup de ce qui se passait. Après une interruption, pendant laquelle tout le monde but du vin demandé par la maladie, un homme se mit à courir autour de la malade en chantant, le corps incliné en avant et les bras ballants. Le medicine-man chef parla encore avec la maladie, pendant que la femme soufflait sur la malade et qu'un autre medicine-man disposait autour de sa tête un certain nombre de couvertures de journaux illustrés et de romans populaires à vingt centavos. Le coureur s'arrêta et le medicine-man chef se mit à parler avec les autres. Tout le monde s'assit en buvant de l'eau et deux femmes se mirent à marcher au pas accéléré, autour des autres, en chantant. L'une d'elles s'arrêta et peu de temps après l'autre l'imita. Puis tous les assistants se mirent à danser, accompagnés par les hoquets de la malade qui avait l'air d'aller de plus en plus mal ; elle mourut, en effet, au milieu de la cérémonie.

Aussitôt après la mort, la danse fut arrêtée ; les vieilles femmes coururent autour de la tente en secouant des maraca et en chantant, tandis que deux hommes couchaient la morte sur le côté droit, en lui repliant les jambes et en croisant (ou repliant) les bras sur la poitrine. Elle fut enveloppée des tissus sur lesquels elle était couchée et rapportée chez elle. Les medicine-men se déshabillèrent tranquillement, pendant que toutes les femmes du village hurlaient les lamentations d'usage.

Notes.

1. Cette femme, étant enceinte de sept mois environ, continua de porter d'énormes charges de bois sec, ce qui provoqua la maladie à laquelle elle succomba.

2. Selon l'opinion du village, la mort était due au fait qu'elle était enceinte avant que son premier enfant sache manger tout seul.

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[P 215-A]

A. - Les medicine-men chantent au rythme des maracas.

B. - Menaces des medicine-men; coup de sifflet annonçant une transformation.

[P.218-B]

A. - Danse autour de la malade.

B. - Danse autour de la malade.

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Mataco Cultural Summary

by

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[title page]

Mataco Cultural Summary

Orientation

105 The Mataco (Mataguagos, Noctenes, or Huenneyei) are a small tribe of the Argentine-Bolivian Gran Chaco. The Mataco are similar in many respects to the other groups in the Chaco area, particularly the nearby Toba-Pilagá. The Mataco are notable particularly for their ceremonial life. Their language is closely related to Choroti.

The Chaco area is one of the most inhospitable in South America and has not been fully explored to this day. The climate is subtropical with considerable variation in rainfall and temperature. During the period of rains in the mountains the rivers may rise 20 or more feet above normal. The temperature frequently goes over 110° F. in the shade during this season. Despite the constant threat of floods and unbearable temperatures the Chaco itself gets little more than sporadic thundershowers during the "rainy" season and drought is the prime problem of the native agriculturalists. The western portion of the Chaco is covered with tropical rain forest, while the eastern portion is open scrub with patches of palms and other trees.

Pelleschi (599: 1876) reported an early missionary account that gave the figure of 20,000 for the Mataco. There are no figures available for the Mataco at present, but it is likely that a few thousand still survive.

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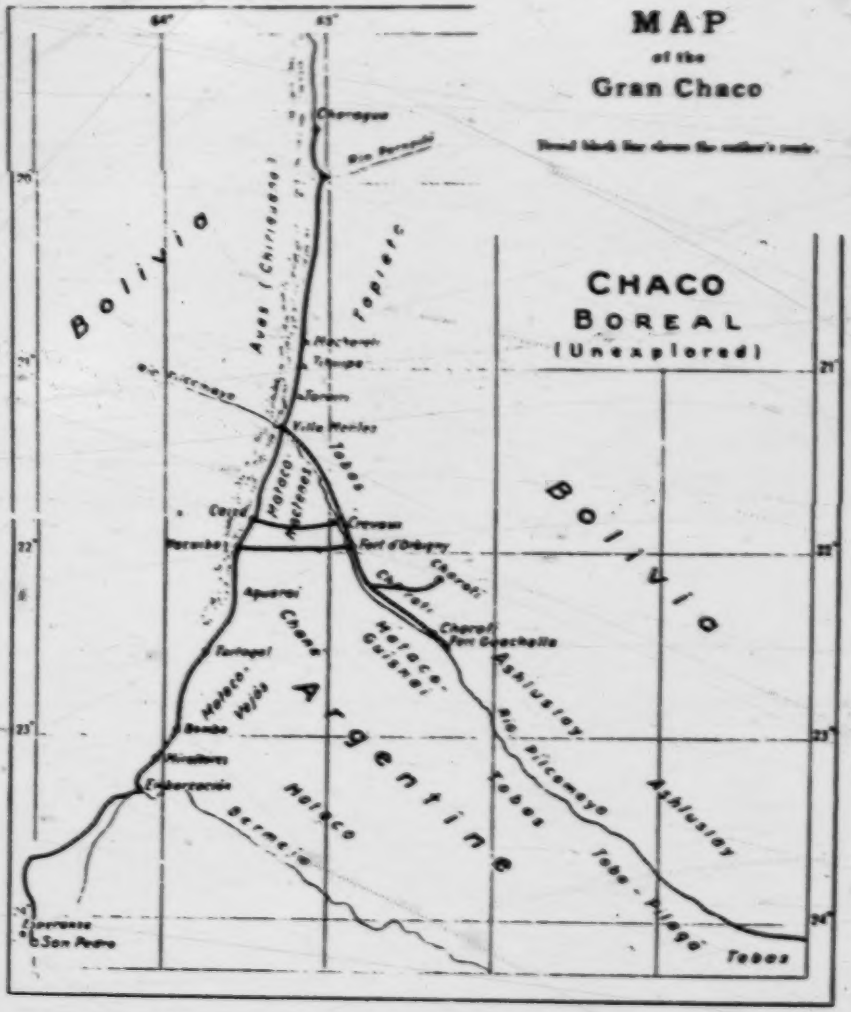

105 Karsten (28: 1932) described the Mataco as sturdy, slightly taller than the Choroti, and with coarse black hair, flat nose, and dark-brown eyes.

There are three Mataco groups. The northern Argentine group is called Vejós and is highly acculturated. The second group, called Mataco-Guisnay, lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo south of Fortín Guachalla. The third group, called Mataco-Nocténes, occupies an area between Yaguiba, Villa Montes, and Crevaux and is the least acculturated. The Mataco have been more exposed to white contact than any other Chaco group. Despite initial culture shock they are among the most adaptable Indian groups on record.

Economy

The Mataco practice a very limited agriculture due in part to the unfavorable ecological situation. Squash is perhaps their most prominent crop plant. Beans, watermelon, manioc, and maize are also grown.

Far more important to the Mataco are the wild fruits, particularly the algarrobo, which may be fairly described as their staple. Algarrobo is preserved during the harvest season for later use. Various wild roots and seeds are also collected. Wild honey is avidly sought after.

105 Fishing, often with nets, is the single most important economic activity, with the occasional surplus dried and stored. Hunting is also practiced and tapir, deer, wild pig, and miscellaneous small animals are utilized.

Sheep, goats, and fowls are kept but do not have great economic importance.

Like most peoples who live primarily by hunting and gathering, the Mataco are accustomed to periods when little food is available, and to gorging themselves when a supply is found. Almost anything that moves or ever has moved is considered edible, although fish is the favorite.

The Mataco weave fabrics, nets, and baskets. Ceramics of good quality are made. Canoes are made from a single tree trunk with the aid of bone and shell tools. Stone is not available in the area for tool making.

Formerly the men did not wear even as much as a breech clout and the women wore only animal skins. Fabric jackets are now sometimes worn. A waist cloth is now the standard single item for men, with the addition of a blanket in cold weather. Women wear a sort of sarong with the body naked from the waist up except in areas of mission influence, where a loose gown has become standard. Children go entirely naked until the age of eight or ten.

Settlements

105 The aboriginal Mataco house is a circular hut built casually with saplings, canes, or whatever material is available, and covered with rushes, grass, or palm leaves. The huts must be entered on hands and knees and are too low for a man to stand upright. Contemporary natives build houses patterned after those of the white settlers.

A village consists of six to twelve of these structures arranged in a rough circle around an open area reserved for sheep and goats and for occasional games or ceremonials. Settlements are always located near a water supply and pasturage, as well as in proximity to a source of the wild fruits on which they depend. The entire settlement can be abandoned on short notice when conditions favor a move to another area. One reason for moving is when the vermin population becomes too oppressive for even the tolerant Mataco. Several deaths in a village will result in the whole place being put to the torch, and the entire group will move to a fresh area. Individual Mataco will also occasionally simply leave and join another group.

A village as a rule is composed of people who are related to one another. There is no real political authority. An elder who is considered unusually wise may have some authority over the village. When such a chief dies the village elders assemble and elect a new chief. In the event of hostilities with an outside group a war chief

105 for the village may be selected and in case of war involving several villages a council of allied chiefs may come into existence.

Acculturated Mataco villages have developed the cacique system. The cacique has very much more power than the aboriginal chiefs, particularly with regard to judiciary functions. The principal function of the chief at present is to act as agent for the tribe in dealings with the whites. The chief is also expected to mediate differences between local groups.

Religion

The Mataco, except for the mission natives, are pagan. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mataco is their extraordinarily elaborate ceremonial and cosmological beliefs. The Mataco believe in an upper and lower world. The upper world has two compartments, the earth and the sky. The underworld is the abode of the dead. There is a great flood legend whose origin is uncertain.

One of the major ceremonial activities is prevention of disease. Tattooing with soot or ashes and bleeding and scarification are regarded as effective magic against disease. Sacred ornaments are also regarded as effective.

Diseases are regarded as the manifestations of evil spirits (nahút), and are most frequently believed to be the result of witchcraft.

105 Incantations, dancing, noise making, and sucking out the evil object are techniques of the shaman. Some herb medicines are used, most often in the form of poultices.

Spirits inhabit many natural objects, and plants and animals. There are in addition "free-floating" spirits which are associated with thunder and lightning, etc. Some of these spirits are good, others are evil.

At all ceremonial occasions such as weddings, dancing, drum playing, drinking, and chanting are part of the effort to drive off bad spirits. Prayers are also addressed to guardian spirits for supernatural aid.

A final type of ceremonial is that for ensuring good fishing, hunting, or harvest. The ceremonial to ensure the algaroba harvest is one of the most prominent.

Marriage

Villages are exogamous since most villagers are more or less closely related. Most marriages are contracted between persons from different villages of the same subtribe. Polygyny is rare. Girls are considered marriageable at twelve to fourteen and there is a marked shortage of marriageable females. Bride service is customary. Residence is at the bride's family until the bride service is completed, and then the couple may move to the husband's

105 village. Following the birth of a child, residence is matrilocal. The mother of the prospective bride has the final authority as to the choice of a husband.

Wives are subject to beatings from their husbands if they are caught in illicit affairs. This, however, seems to have little effect, since Mataco women are apt to have at least one lover. Unfaithfulness may lead to divorce, but since women are scarce such activity is sometimes overlooked.

Kinship

Descent, according to Karsten (49: 1932), is matrilineal, though the father's relatives are recognized. Terminology is of the Hawaiian type. The mother's family is the primary relationship group, and men are identified with their wife's clan, if married, and with their mother's if single.

Life Cycle

The Mataco woman is traditionally the more aggressive sexually. Premarital sex is fairly open and quite permissive. Girls who have had sexual intercourse the night before paint their faces red. Sex during marriage has several taboos associated. For example, couples are supposed to abstain from sexual activity from the time a child is born until it has teeth.

105 Infanticide and abortion are practiced by unmarried females.

At childbirth, the mother is assisted by a midwife and the father. The Mataco practice a limited form of the couvade, that is, the father does not go to bed, but is expected to refrain from any sort of activity.

Many complicated ceremonials are utilized following childbirth to ward off evil from the mother and child. Names are bestowed by the father when the child is one to three years old. These names often stem from dreams.

Children are allowed considerable freedom and are often carried about by the mother. Infants are breast fed until about one year and are then gradually weaned. Children are rarely punished or reprimanded.

No particular ceremony is attached to boys attaining puberty, but girls are the center of feasts, dances, beer-drinking, and religious rituals when their first menstruation occurs.

Children are trained by observing the activities of their elders, especially in fishing and hunting.

Sexual relationships and marriage have been outlined above.

The attainment of majority is recognized with the insertion of wooden plugs into slots in the ears.

The elderly are regarded as having special magical powers. The old are generally well-treated though early accounts say that the

105 elderly, along with cripples, were often left behind or even killed.

Conclusion

The Mataco have a relatively primitive culture, based on hunting and gathering. They have a meager material culture since as semi-nomads they do not accumulate possessions. Their ceremonial is fairly elaborate, however, for a people in this stage of development. They had, aboriginally, an almost complete lack of political integration even at the village level. Modern influences have led to a modification of this political and social pattern.

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[231] PART TWO

An attempt to compile a gram mar of the Mataco tongue. 121

I

Origin of this section of the work.

In honor of Juan María Gutiérrez

While we were awaiting the assistance for which we had asked, and which would probably be some time coming, I thought that I could best use all the leisure time which was being forced upon me, by attempting to gather words from the surrounding Indians.

I had heard on repeated occasions that these savages had only an impoverished language with scant words and forms. Because of what I had read (which admittedly was not much) in the field of philology, I was persuaded that the very opposite was probably closer to the truth, and I wished to make some personal observations in order to arrive at a more solid opinion on the subject and then communicate my findings to others. Just before leaving Buenos Aires I had had a conversation with Doctor Juan María Gutiérrez, and he had said the following to me:

"If you have time, take up and study the language of these savages. Because of the complete lack of traditions and of archeological data regarding these Indians, the discipline of linguistics is called to play an important part in the discovery of their origin, or at least of their correlation -- if such exists -- with other peoples in the remote past; remote, that is, when compared with the present known history of man. Apart from this, linguistics is fast becoming a science, and given time will most certainly surprise us with the splendid results which it will achieve in outlining the history of humanity."

To which he added by way of encouragement: [232]

"The field of linguistics is still for the greater part virgin and therefore promises an abundant harvest to anyone who cultivates it -- take advantage of this opportunity, for you will not be wasting your time."

How could I possibly lend a deaf ear to such expert advice? Even though I might not be equipped to contribute more than an insignificant pebble to the linguistic pyramid, I yet felt stimulated by his words, and to a certain extent committed. Later, while I cudgeled my brain in an effort to untangle and isolate some rule from that mass of words which I had been able to collect, I would every now and then be successful and the resultant feeling of delight in accomplishment would be augmented by the anticipation of the further delight which would be mine when I returned to Buenos Aires and presented my findings to Gutiérrez and talked at length with him.

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May your memory, oh Gutiérrez, remain ever as alive and lasting in the hearts of your countrymen as it is in the heart of the author of these lines, who will preserve it in all its freshness! Be pleased to accept as dedicated to you, and protect with your name, the few paltry lines which I may write in the following pages on the subject of the Indian languages -- for it is to you that I owe them, and without you as patron I would not have dared to publish them!

II

Beginnings of the work. Particulars of a personal nature.

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At the beginning of my labors I had but little hope of crowning my efforts with any success. We had on board with us an Indian

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aleja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *anutsha;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

[p. 91]

take pains to comb themselves, particularly the women. I remember an occasion when I wished very much to obtain a paddle, made of "palo-fierro" [iron-wood--Translator] and having two blades, the blades ending in long, narrow points. It belonged to an Indian friend of mine who had quite a beautiful wife. I offered him a comb in exchange for the double paddle, but after having considered the matter for a while he refused to make the exchange. His wife seemed to me to be very sorry that the deal had not come off, and she must have made use of all her wiles for on the following day her husband spontaneously came [176] and proposed that we make the exchange. It may be that the reader would have thought better of my being a little more generous, but let it be remembered that if I had given my comb away I would not then have been able to obtain the paddle, which was of more interest to me than the Adamic Indian couple.

What I have said of the Matacos can also be said of the Tobas, with this addition, that the Tobas are taller than the former Indians and generally show a larger expanse of forehead -- I do not know if they are actually broader -- owing to their habit of tying their hair up with a band. This information is true also of the Mocovíes and Chulupíes, all of whom inhabit the Argentine Gran Chaco, to the north of which, in the Bolivian Chaco, live the Chiriguanos and Cirionoses.

Among all these Indians the skin color varies between that of new copper and mud, there being also, here and there, some with blackish markings or blemishes.

Chapter III

Some Ethnic Characteristics

It is customary to say that these Indians are extremely dirty, but I have some very serious doubts in that regard, for I have seen them, in the summer time, run into the river for pleasure's sake at certain fixed hours of the day in great numbers, both men and women, each sex in its own determined place. This would appear to be a custom and not a mere whim. In addition to this they often go into the water to fish. It is true that they seem to be dirty, mostly because of their

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

because he was so tall, and the Matacos called Quiatzutaj, which means Vilelón (large Vilela Indian--Translator), because of his national origin and size, when I asked him how things were going with him replied: "Well...I...I rich...I having...much... algarrobo pods...I rich." They are miserly with these pods and with aloja, to the extent that they will not barter them except on very rare occasions. Only in a niggardly way and half heartedly will they invite anyone to share their aloja.

One morning I came upon a group of some forty Indians who were sitting around a yuchan of aloja. When I made my appearance and as soon as they recognized me they all began to shout: "John, John...yúc-cu-ás...yúc-cu-ás" (tobacco, tobacco), and I answered "hué-ni-tdé: niquiolá pac" (I have none, later I shall give you some). Only then did they invite me to drink with them and at my first refusal did not insist a second time, the chief saying to me -- "No my child...no...we...taking...you giving...tobacco." This was by way of politeness, in the Indian manner to be sure, but politeness nonetheless. I, to please them, made some effort to speak a few words to them in their own language and finally took my leave saying: "Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet...nutpinlá pac...niquioc-la yuc-cu-as..." (Goodbye, I am going home...I shall come back right away...I shall give tobacco). And all of them, full of pleasure because I spoke to them in their language and promised them tobacco shouted: "Amecná... amecná...tapil...ccaelitt (Goodbye, goodbye, come back soon). I returned after two or three hours with my pockets bursting with cut tobacco [190] and found all of them still drinking. As soon as they saw me they reminded me of my promise, which I thought they might have forgotten amidst the fumes of drunkenness. I distributed it to them and even when it was all gone they kept on asking me for more, upon which I turned my pockets inside out and shouted to them "namhuen, namhuen" (I have no more). They, satisfied with the eloquence of my demonstration, gave up their clamoring saying hée hée, which means "well, well"; but they forgot to offer me another drink of aloja.

While on the subject of greetings: these Indians have the custom of tapping the chest of their guests lightly and amicably with their half-closed fist, accompanying these caresses with expressions of good fellowship such as hée, hée, etc. -- (Good, good! etc.).

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs.

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

Chaco Indians SI4

ignorant whites, in their turn, have a great deal of faith in the Indian witch doctors.

I know for a fact that rich ranchers have called Indians to come and treat them.

The witch doctors attempt to cure their patients by exorcising the a'hots by shouting, leaping, and blowing and spitting into the sick person's mouth. They prescribe, along with this exorcising activity, certain homeopathic remedies such as dieting, bathing and I believe massaging also.

The faith which they place in their incantations does not wane even in the presence of white man's medicine.

It happened once while we were on board the river boat that the boat stuck fast in the mud. A number of Indians surrounded us and a group of them brought forward a sick Indian for us to cure. We did not have our interpreter with us on that occasion, but I was able to put my notes to some use and finally understood that the invalid had been bitten by a snake: -- "Chiasquietáj-Kíá" -- "snake-bite remedy" was what they were saying.

We had a small medicine chest and hurriedly applied ammonia to the bite. It was extremely important for us that the outcome of our ministrations be a positive one for we needed to gain prestige and also friends among the Indians, for relations were strained and some days previously we had been ambushed by a group of them who had then fired on us at point blank range.

Our patient, however, improved very slowly and there were times during the first three days -- a superstitiously critical period -- in which we had serious doubts of his recovering, because the swelling kept growing upwards towards the groin and belly and, if it had reached the area close to the heart all would have been over for him.

During this whole period of treatment -- which was carried on in a pretty rigorous fashion, [210] the situation hardly calling for ladies with kid gloves -- the patient took only water, as the witch doctors prescribed, and then, during the night while the crew slept, the doctors would begin to chant húu húu húu... héé héé héé... híi híi híi... and then once more húu húu húu, etc. Every now and again they would spit and blow like so many bellows upon the wound and other parts of the body, keeping this up for hours on end.

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I, who used to stay up very late, both to do my stint at guard duty and to take advantage of a few uninterrupted hours for study, used to take up a stand close to them. At first my presence there made them keep quiet, but later on, taking heart at my reiterated hiss tzilataj ("very pretty"), and seeing that I did not make fun of them, they continued in spite of my being there.

At last, after twenty days, the sick man got well.

One of the very strange treatments is the one which they ad- 752
minister to those who have been poisoned by a sting ray, which fish can administer an extremely painful and sometimes mortal wound. This treatment consists in placing the offended part, which is usually the ankle, over the smoke given off from the cracks in burning palo santo [lignum vital --Translator], which is a resinous wood, after which a woman in her menstruating period is to sit astride it. I have been assured by whites who have made the experiment that it is a very efficacious remedy.

Every treatment for sickness or wounds however needs, if it 756
is to have any virtue, to be in the hands of a witch doctor (male), *or at least in those of a female witch doctor.*

Not everyone can be a witch doctor, and just as the members of this profession make their patients pay according to the seriousness of the malady and the means of the individual, either in skins, animals, food or other things, so also does this profession have its seamy side in which quarrels and deception occur. In addition to this and in order to get greater prestige they shroud themselves in mystery and the supernatural. So it is that in the village of Granadero the Indians, speaking about a young man who was already embarked on this career, said that as a boy he had vanished and then reappeared after two years which he had spent underground among the a'hot, these a'hot having carried him off in order to instruct him in the art and imbue him with the virtues of doctor and priest.

While on the subject of these frauds I must tell of an occasion when things almost took a bad turn for me. I went to call on 123
Chief Granadero who was just recovering from a long illness. I 755
had with me, as is my custom, a pocket inkwell and a pen. Granadero noticed these things and asked me what they were. I, thinking to please him flourished the inkwell and pen and set about writing, but saw in a moment that Granadero had become furious and menacing -- his doctors had just cured him of the a'hot which

123 755

had been tormenting him for so long, and had extracted from his body several pens and a pencil, under guise of which, they said, the a'hot had been harming him.

[211] The women seem to be extraordinarily able as mid- 844 759 wives.

With singular ability they wait for the critical moment of labor and then, raising and holding the mother-to-be they shake her and keep uttering their customary exorcisms until they are successful in their endeavors.

However, if one wishes to be in on an interesting spectacle 755 one must see an invalid getting the full treatment in a village.

One evening while I was camped near a tribe I became curious on hearing a great sound of voices and the repercussion of strong blows on the ground. As my relations with these Indians was of the very best I did not hesitate to go to see what was afoot. In the midst of the village, in a sort of central square, I saw a circle of black figures illuminated fitfully by the blaze of the fires; they were the squaws and men who were sitting on their heels smoking in silence. In the center of the circle, in a space of about eight meters, four robust men with ostrich feathers and timbrels at their ankles, wrists, waists and on their heads were running back and forth, with their hands raised, gesticulating wildly and rattling some gourds half filled with seeds which added to the noise. They ran about singing and howling, and one could see that they were panting and covered with sweat. They would straighten out their legs and pound the ground with the whole sole of their feet, and as they did this they would raise their voices in a mad, desperate way, with their arms on high, heads to one side and body curved over.

Alternately two of them would stop, crouch, move their heads rapidly from right to left and up and down, howl and blow and spit on the backs, legs, heads and mouths of two invalids who were seated in their midst.

The two sick men were suffering terribly from the a'hots which had entered their bodies in the form of rheumatic pains, and the [753] witch doctors were attempting to drive them out with their infernal dance. This, it was understood, they would be unable to do until they managed, by means of their unbridled racing about and thumping, to tire and intimidate the a'hots who, with evil intent

Those pots which are used to contain water have an indented waistline around which a rope may be passed when they need to be transported. This rope, running around the jar, is slipped over the carrier's forehead and the vessel is carried on his back, to which effect he must bend back and neck forward. This manner of transportation is no where near as graceful as that of carrying jars on the head as our country women do, and rather makes the Indian women look like beasts of burden -- however, it may well be a more hygienic way and is, in any case, more practical when traveling along half choked forest paths.

They have no knowledge of, and do not practice, agriculture; yet they do sometimes plant corn (which, as is well known, originated in America) and also pumpkins. When they think it is time to go and eat the crop, they harvest it. They do not grind the corn, but boil it and the pumpkins also while they are yet green -- a harvest, then, is gathered in piece meal and lasts quite a long time. In order to sow they make use of a hard wood spade in the form of a small oar, or a large spear head; the husband makes a hole in the earth, his squaw throws in the seed, covers it, and that is all. The seed is sown in a recently burned off, damp field, that is, one which has just been rained on.

The crop is owned communally by all, but they are nigardly with it concerning outsiders. While we were on the ship, most of our food having run out, we hungered for fresh provisions and vegetables, for we had been without them for more than three months. When the Indians made us a present of pumpkins and ears of corn we were more than delighted. These Indians were friendly, but later on their friendliness proved false for they killed our interpreter. The sailors managed to discover the location of the pumpkin patch and corn field and raided them by stealth. On the following day, when they returned to the cultivated plots they found that everything had been destroyed and not a single growing plant was left. We were never able to find even one of the Indians.

It seems, also, that the whites do not want the Indians to take up agriculture. I was told that the white settlers once [215] came upon a number of fields sown by friendly frontier Indians, and destroyed them so completely that the discouraged Indians had never again planted so much as a handbreadth of land. This action

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or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

/215 cont./

755 The whole ceremony lasted from March 20 to March 24,
554 every day from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. and from 8 to 10 P.M.
Each day at the end of the ceremony a shot was fired to frighten the illness.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(March 26, 1933)

755 On March 26 another woman who had the same symptoms of illness as the preceding one was treated in the following manner: the site already described was used, but the flag was replaced by a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers, and a thick tuft of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the post. The staff was decorated with ritual belts. Offerings of the same type as those for the preceding ceremony were placed on the crossbars which separated the tent from the village.
755 During the entire ceremony the sick woman remained seated
535 /216/ on a bale of hay in the center of the tent; right next to her were four of the great medicine men, a little farther away about ten young dancers, and then a final circle of six or seven women. All the officiants, adorned as usual with feathers, ritual belts, and little bells, danced and sang. A passage was
● [123] contrived in the separating crossbars, and, as I insisted on it, a medicine man came to tell me that this opening was intended to let the illness out; I asked him if my presence would prevent it from going out; he told me no, but that I was running the risk that it would enter me at the moment it left the body of the sick woman.

The dance was halted at a sign from the chief medicine man, and two men, taking a poncho, striped red and white, by its ends, began to dance, jumping sideways, legs open; then

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II

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At the beginning of my labors I had but little hope of crowning my efforts with any success. We had on board with us an Indian

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who claimed to be a Mataco, [233] and whom I immediately 124 ●
pressed into service by asking him the names of the different garments we were wearing and the objects which surrounded us. But the man would soon tire after I had asked him just a few words. It was evident that intellectual exertions, be they ever so light, were not for him. Whenever I would ask him the same word twice he would give me to understand that he had already told me and, picking up my notebook, would turn the few written pages it contained and find the right one and point out the general area in which the word alluded to was to be found. And yet I could have sworn that he was looking in some other direction while I was writing! When it is mentioned amongst us that someone is "acting the part of an Indian" -- in the sense that he is pretending to be unaware of what is going on -- a very great truth is affirmed.

With all this I was able to advance little or nothing in my 124
work.

But when a few days later we were harangued by the Toba chief, who seemed to be barking rather than talking, then I became absolutely convinced that I must keep to my own field of knowledge and not wander innocently into others, so useless did it seem to me even to attempt to make any sense out of those barks.

Man, however, proposes and circumstance disposes. A few days later we ran aground, and as we were unable to continue on our way I had ample spare time at my disposal to make use of as I saw fit. The Indians milled about on the land beside the ship. Many chiefs came to see us and we could not understand a word of what they said to us...here then was my opportunity, and I made ready to take full advantage of it.

The Indian is distrustful by nature and does not want out- 115
siders to learn his language; but among them was one Faustino, 124
a Christian [Text unclear as to whether this man was a "Christian Indian" who had given up his religion and returned to his own people, or a "Christian white" who had taken up with the Indians -- Translator.] who had gone over to them, and I, by stealth and without the Indians' knowing it, began to question him. However, I did not find this at all satisfactory, finding so much apparent

confusion in the words when they were strung into sentences and attributing the difficulty to Faustino's little understanding of the matter in hand. At last we were able to establish more friendly relations with the Indians by dint of our frank and open treatment; my continual and almost reverential repetition of their words as though they were precious things whenever an opportunity offered and, finally by the judicious distribution of a few gifts all of which, in combination, made them lose their wariness, especially in the case of the younger ones who then outdid themselves in telling me, of their own volition, the name of every object I cared to ask about. 116 124

But it was really strange: a word, when repeated, would change and be different for no apparent reason. At times its vowel sounds would seem separate, at others dipthonged, to the extent that if one of the two component sounds were stressed more than the other, neither one would agree. Often the change was in the syllable itself, so to speak, while on occasion there would be either a gain or a loss of a syllable. [Original version garbled--Translator] 124 [115]

One morning we made a test with Natalio Roldán. We spent a quarter of an hour establishing between us which was the true [234] sound which was to be reproduced with Spanish signs, and whether it was this sound or some other which had come through in a given word. This vagueness and lack of certainty confirmed Roldán in his opinion that the Mataco language was an enigma which could not be transcribed, was devoid of rules, and could not be learned, as the Missionary Fathers (who were established in Christian territory near the frontier) themselves had affirmed.

My ear, however, becoming accustomed to these new sounds, brought me slowly to the realization that the Mataco tongue was not after all that wild, untamable mustang which people would have one believe. This I realized while only as yet being able to isolate the sounds, for I could not at that time comprehend the reasons behind certain syllabic changes.

I decided to take a new tack and avoid all pretentious arguments on the subject, channelling my efforts into accumulating sentences, examining and comparing them later in order to be

able to extract a few rules from them after having written them down as it seemed to me that they sounded. 124

One day the son of a chief stopped by and I began to ask him the names of all the parts of his body. Naked as he was there was no possibility of confusing these parts of the body with the clothing associated with them. 124 193

Hardly had he finished when I perceived that each one of those fifteen or twenty words began, without exception, with nu or no, the u and the o substituting each other frequently, the difference in sound being hardly perceptible.

"Well I'll be...!" I said to myself. This nu is either an article or a relating particle, for it is not conceivable that so many words have the same root. It didn't seem likely to me that it was an article, but nevertheless I remembered that when I was a boy and I was asked by someone to name the parts of my face I used to answer using the article, and saying -- for example: "the mouth, the eye," etc. Why could these Indians not be just as childish as I?

I very soon had my doubts resolved. I asked him the same questions with reference to my own body, and he repeated the words he had given me, but changing the nu to a, and sometimes a few of the other letters which followed after the nu. It was as though a bolt of lightning had suddenly illumined my understanding -- but doubt returning, and being very desirous to get to the bottom of this problem, I took advantage of the occasion of my having caught a chimango [kite-like bird--Translator] and asked the same questions about the various parts of its body. In the answers I was given, many of the words began with lu or lo, but remained otherwise pretty much the same as those pertaining to man, minus that famous nu or a.

The following conclusion, almost concrete and tangible in its clarity, flashed before me: So the Matacos prefix a variable particle to their radical words, and this particle probably expresses a relationship. But what relationship?...I searched again through my notes, especially among the phrases and sentences and found that on every occasion when reference was made to the person who was talking the term began [235] with nu; if reference was to the person spoken to, with a, and if to a third person, then with lu or lo. 193

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

XIII. The Diseases

753 The diseases are demons which have the appearence of
776 men but are invisible. They wear feathers like medicine-
755 men. Smallpox for instance is especially ugly. His head is swollen and full of small holes. He lives not for from Salta, in a cave on a big mountain. The demons of disease live under the ground or within the *yuchanes*. They leave their shelter to enter men and make them sick. In order to get them out of the bodies of sick people one must ask them what they want, for the demons always want something. One has to say, »What do you want?» The demon answers, »Food, dresses, a gun.» All these things are to be given him. But they are equally satisfied with only the sight of these things and men may very well eat the food or make use of the things whose essence the demons have received. It would be very dangerous to eat of a dish before the demon has helped himself. Men dance in order to scare a demon or chase him away. The demon is obliged to participate in the dancing and gets tired. When those who take part in a treatment have danced for a while, the magician speaks to the disease. The disease asks whether they are angry with him. The medicine-man answers, »No, we are dancing as usual.» The disease then says, »Then let us not dance any longer, for I am to dance to-morrow too.»

753 Each thing has its *husék* (spirit) or image and it is this
774 image which the disease requires after he has stolen or entered the soul of the man and it is this soul which the medicine-man has gone to get. During the first part of all medical ceremonies, the medicine-man's spirit goes to the disease and asks him which things he wants in return for the sick man's soul.

● [124] One of the reasons why the Matako always require payment to let themselves be photographed is that by photographing them one takes their image (spirit) and thus may hurt them. The money they get for the photograph may eventually

114 back to France a short but useful vocabulary of Vejoz, a dialect of the Matacos living near the river Zeta or Oran, but this [560] document remained in obscurity among that author's papers in the National Library of Paris until it was found by Mr. Luciano Adam, who was kind enough to send it to me at Pilciao.

114 ●126 Without knowing anything about the language of the Mataco Indians, completely free from prejudice regarding both the Indians and their language, and intent upon finding out what he could at first hand, Mr. Pelleschi traveled into the Chaco in the manner which he so picturesquelly describes, capping his work with a linguistic treatise in which he re-discovered (may I be allowed the expression) the language of the Uicquii, whom we call Matacos and Mataguayos. The author cuts himself free from all preconceived notions as to grammatical rules of the "sum, es, fuit," type and writes down what he hears, not once, but a thousand times, until he discovers the part of speech to which, according to our way of thinking, the word he was treating corresponded, together with its other accidental characteristics. In the very same order in which he came upon them he sets them down in his travel notebook, in such a way that Mr. Pelleschi allows us to take part in his discoveries and we can delight with him in each new find.

000 Unfortunately for us the book was written in Italian. Doctor José Gutiérrez, friend of the author and warmly interested in these matters, had died, and there was therefore lacking one who would take an active interest in the book, which was, nevertheless, a revelation regarding the study of Argentine languages. Thus it was that the book remained of interest only to bibliophiles, among whom was General Mitre, and it is to him that I owe my first introduction to this meritorious and extremely interesting work.

After reading the book I resolved to make the author's acquaintance, since it dawned on me, in half an hour's perusal, that information of this type is not set down without copious notes, and I realized that there was an important drawback to the work, which was the lack of a vocabulary which might serve as background and complement to the Grammatical Essay covering the last few chapters.

It was not hard to find a mutual friend, and in 1889 there began a relationship which has yielded me many hours of real pleasure and satisfaction.

●126 One by one the words have been checked, the missing twenty five percent has been augmented, the Indians from whom different words and phrases were gathered have been designated with a distinguishing initial, and the unorganized notes on the Otto Mesi [Eight Months] have been translated somewhat more artfully, though under the author's guidance. This was really necessary for matters of reference.

I can say that both he and I have worked with real joy, and now that we are parting after finishing the work, it seems to me that I experience again the feeling which overcame me when I said goodbye to my University companions in the happy years which [563] I spent at Cambridge. I cannot dedicate this work to Pelleschi, nor he to me; but I am sure that he will not be opposed to our dedicating it to the unfortunate Larsen, pioneer in these matters, and the first to make Pelleschi's work known in this country.

Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo.

Buenos Aires, November 3, 1896

Historical References

I

●127 If we were to affirm that the Matacos or Mataguayos are first mentioned in the writings of the Missionary Fathers, we would expose ourselves to correction when, at some future date, the archives of our motherland be better known. However, lacking such facts, and without having the work of Father Salinas at hand, I must necessarily begin by setting down what Father Techo says in his Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay [History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay].

175 Refer to volume I, chapters 40 to 43 etc., which include the years 1590, 1591 and 1592.

In the first of these years Fathers Pedro Añasco and Juan Fonte arrived at Tucuman, at the same time that the famous and apostolic Father Alonso Bárcena was evangelizing the Lules, those on the slopes of (Mount) Aconguija, not those under Father Machoni's care. Father Bárcena, full of good works, toiled without ceasing among those belligerent Indians, underfed and in imminent danger of losing his life, but undismayed for all that, so much so that when called to order by his superior he answered with these noble and heart felt words [Latin parallel text omitted. See foreign text--Translator]: "I shall go to you as soon as possible, Father, and at your feet I shall say: Here I am; send me, be it that you return me to the Lules, or to the Calchaquies, to the Chaquenses or the Frontones, or to the uttermost ends of the earth, for I desire with an insatiable longing to be sent where I may suffer all things in behalf of those souls who are to be saved."

It is quite apparent here that the good Father differentiated be-
[114] tween Lules, Calchaquies, Chaquenses and Frentones. In my opinion the Chaquenses were the Mataraes, Matacos or Mataguayos who spoke the Tonocoté language. [564]

II

The Matará People

In chapter 41 Father Techo goes on to tell how the Spaniards founded the city of Concepción del Bermejo, 30 leagues from the point

Los Indios Matacos y su Lengua
[The Mataco Indians and their Language]

by
Juan Pelleschi (Engineer)
with an introduction by
Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo, M.A.

Part I

Preliminary Introduction

114

Before Mr. Juan Pelleschi published his interesting and painstaking book "Ocho Meses en el Gran Chaco" [Eight Months in the Gran Chaco] the language of the Matacos was practically unknown, although it was common knowledge that many tribes spoke it. It is hard to understand how this language could have disappeared so completely without leaving so much as a trace in the archives of the Jesuit Fathers; but the fact is that even at the beginning of the past century Father Machoni himself complained about the loss of grammars and vocabularies of the Tonocoté language, with which language I identify the Mataco-Mataguayo tongue [797] and which was the language used by the Jesuit missionaries to indoctrinate and evangelize these Indians.

In the early part of this century Hervás and Adelung, the former with his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" [Catalogue of Languages] the latter with his "Mithridates," were able to mention only the name of the language, as though to have on record that they were aware of its existence, but they lamented that they had been unable to secure a single fact in regard to it, not even a Pater Noster with which to illustrate their extremely sparse knowledge of this interesting group of languages spoken by countless Indians, (that is to say by Chaco Indians). The fact is that some time later the scholarly French traveler Alcides d'Orbigny, took

[128]

Translator's Note: The Spanish word "cristiano" when used as a noun which literally means "Christian" has been translated throughout as "white man" or "white," since the translator feels that this is really closer to its basic meaning. "Non-Indian" might have been used instead but it seemed cumbersome and did not carry with it the tone of superiority which both "cristiano" in Spanish and "white" in English (however unfortunately) carry.

C
M read in the same place that the most commonly used language in the
175 Chaco was the Tonocoté, that it was not Toba or the language of Cuzco, for it says there that "Father Juan Oloris knew the language of the Incas, and was learning Tonocoté, which was the language of the Chaco mission."

VIII

What Father Lozano Says

M● What precedes has been extracted from the work of Father Techo.
114 I shall now do likewise with the Descripción Chorográfica [Chorographic
●128 Description] of the Chaco written by Father Lozano and published in Córdoba in 1733.

This author retold most of what Father Techo had written in this regard, but also added many details of interest which illustrate the former text and serve to eliminate some doubts. In this chapter I shall set down all that Lozano has said about the Matacos or Mataguayos, and the references will be to the pages of the book written by this priest.

Speaking of the Paraná river, page 25, he says: "The region which this great river waters in the Chaco is inhabited by the infidel Abipones, some Mocovíes who fled from the Salta frontier, and the Callagaes, who at one time used to be called Matarães."

Father Lozano devotes pages 39 and 51 to recounting the tradition, which he relates in his history of Tucumán, [regarding Indian migration under Spanish pressure--Translator] to explain the cause for the Chaco's dense population. Undoubtedly the Chaco was the apparent refuge [573] for the more belligerent Indians and for those in revolt, and it is probable that what was happening then was a repetition of the numberless previous migrations of a like kind. Those who were dissatisfied and answered to the Inca also fled to the Chacos.

M On page 51 Lozano gives a list of the nations inhabiting the
175 Chaco from which I shall extract the following by reason of its being relevant to this study: "Mataguayos ... Amulalaes, in times past called Matarás ... Tonocotés ... Chunipies ... Callages ...

"On the river Pilcomayo, at a distance of 40 leagues from the Andean mountains live the Tobas and Mataguayos, the two nations numbering about 4,000 members and who are eaters of human flesh." (page 53). As ever the Tobas live as close neighbors to the Matacos.

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"Note:--The material contained in the foregoing chapters has been taken from the book Otto Mesi ["Eight Months" --Translator] in which it was set down in a hodgepodge manner and in the order in which the author had come upon it in his travels, which is only natural when one is going about with a note pad in one's hand faithfully setting down facts of interest. This order was not convenient in a work such as the present for many reasons, not the least being ease of reference. However little these Indian languages may lend themselves to rules of a sum, es, fui type, it is always best to try to explain them in grammatical terms familiar to us. Everything is conventional anyway in this realm for, except for cases such as the Volapuk, every language was first spoken and then written and only much later reduced to grammar.

The chapter dealing with pronouns was compiled from loose observations found in several chapters. The importance of this "part of speech," if we may use the term, when speaking of the Mataco language, necessitated a separate chapter, however short and unsatisfactory, in view of the fact that it is the most difficult element for every collector of vocabularies. This difficulty was the cause of the author's not having such a chapter in his original essay, a lack which we have here remedied--The Editor."

[Pages 275-350 of the Spanish text consist of a Mataco vocabulary which has not been translated into English and will be found only in category 116 with the rest of the foreign text. --Analyst]

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

114 It is strange that in the last two reports so much importance has been given to the Noctén tribes about which nothing is said by authors writing in colonial times. This in itself already tends to favor the hypothesis that the Noctenes may be the Tonocotés.

In this part of the continent it does not seem that there occurred that veritable extermination of whole tribes, such as was the case with the Charruas in Uruguay and we must therefore search about somewhere for the 60,000 and more Indians who understood or spoke the Tonocoté language. Among them were the Mataguayos, who exist down to the present day; it would be only natural, then, to affirm that Mataguayo is a dialect of Tonocoté, and since Noctén and Mataguayo are closely related dialects, it follows that Noctén is as much a dialect of Tonocoté as is Mataguayo.

In the following chapter I shall set forth a report which was sent to me by Father Eliseo Molina of the Franciscan College at Tarija. [609]

XIX

What Father Doroteo Giannecchini has to Say Regarding the Noctenes and Other Mataco Tribes

101 "The Noctenes, Matacos, Vejoses, Guiznaes, and Chulupies belong to one single nation, for all speak the same language and have the same customs."

184 "Such nations are differentiated by their name and by traits which I shall call provincial or local."

101 "Our Noctenes, for example, who are the ones who inhabit the country between the foot of the Pisapo mountain range and Pikírenda, 50
● 131 or 60 leagues to the east, are called Noctenes. In the vicinity of Pikírenda they take the name of Guiznaes; but they are of the same family as our Noctenes and are even related to them by blood."

"From Pikírenda onwards, some 30 leagues, more or less, and up to the Paraguay River they take the name of Chulupies; and along the whole right bank of the Pilcomayo River, from our first Noctén mission on to the Paraguay River, it is the same tribe: their

101 speech and customs are somewhat different, but in substance it is the
● 131 same language, and they understand each other perfectly when each speaks in his own way."

"Across from the Colonia Crevaux, on the left bank towards the north there is another tribe called Chorotis which must originally have been a group captured by the Noctenes for their language is a true Mataco or Noctén dialect and many words are identical with Noctén words."

"It is true that these Chorotis live as unto themselves forming a separate tribe, but they are related to and have continual dealings with the Noctenes. Their pronunciation is, however, much clearer and more intelligible than that of the Noctenes."

"These same Noctenes are related to the Matacos of Oran and the Chaco, in which place the Noctenes are called Matacos, and the Matacos living between the left bank of the Oran River and the reservation in which we had a mission at the beginning of this century, take the name of Vejoses, and have their own local way of speaking the same language as the Noctenes and Matacos. Higher up, that is in our Bolivian Itiyuro, they again take the name of Matacos." [610]

"The fact is then that they do not have what might be called
[197] a separate language—rather do they vary the pronunciation of certain terms which does not constitute a separate language but a local variation, as happens with the Spanish of Bolivians, Argentines, Chilians, etc., and between town and town, region and region."

This description was sent to me when I asked for a Pater-noster in Mataguayo, having already received one in Nocten.

All that has been transcribed in the previous chapters shows that
114 in the opinion of the missionary fathers the typical tribe was the Nocten, and that this is the name they use where we would say Matacos and Mataguayos. It is to be understood, then, that Nocten is nothing but a corruption of the name Tonocoté or Toconoté, already mentioned.

XX

Geographic Distribution of Mataco-type Nations

101 From all that has been told us by the Fathers of the Company
131 and of the Franciscan Missions it can be deduced that the Mataco tribes occupy a diagonal region which in times past extended from the basin

of the Salado (1) River to the Pilcomayo, hemmed in towards the

1. From Matará northwards.

mountains by tribes of Quichua influence and others, and in the direction of the Río de la Plata by nations of the Toba-Guaycurú type. This vast region was bounded on the north by Chiriguano territory, and on the south by the Quichuas and Pampas of the Guaycurú-Querandí type.

It appears at present that the basin of the Salado River ceased to be territory of the nomad Matacos who, in the past century, were replaced by the Mocovíes and other tribes of a more definite Guycurú type. Lozano in his first volume and on page 175 (Lamas Ed.) says that "gasta" means town in the Tonocoté language. This being the case these tribes must have entered the valleys of Yocavil and Londres also, for all the Andean region is full of places whose names end in "gasta" (2). According to my observations "gasta" is as Cacan a word

2. In none of the Mataco-Mataguayo dialects does the term "gasta" appear.

as is "ao."

In any case one thing must needs be conceded and that is that the Mataco tribes had shifted towards the southwest up to the Aconquija range. [611]

The Matacos, like the Tobas and other Guaycurú nations are and were nomads, and of course one cannot indicate exactly the areas frequented by them when they were on the move; at one time they would go in one direction, at another in another, according to pressure from more warlike tribes or from the Spaniards.

All agree that after the Spanish conquest numerous tribes of Matacos or Tonocotés withdrew towards the Pilcomayo River basin and this is exactly what would have been expected because there they were less exposed to Spanish raiders who would carry off any Indian they found to forced labor; these they used to call piezas "pieces of ordinance"--Translator].

1:Pelleschi--68 C-5 (ca 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

Bulletin of the
Argentine Geographic Institute

Volume XVIII

[173] The Mataco Indians and their Language

by
Juan Pelleschi
Civil Engineer

PART ONE

Chapter I

Geographic Situation

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The Matacos are hemmed in on the West by the Salta border line and on the East by the Toba frontier. Caught thus between two enemies, they have of necessity formed alliances, the Eastern Matacos with the Tobas and the Western Matacos with the white colonists, each group warring upon the other. In spite of this division the Matacos hold to their common language jealously, although it is true that there are slight dialectal differences to be noted. Thus, for example, the Eastern Matacos almost invariably say "quiâ" and "tzâ" where their Western counterparts would say "châ," regardless of the fact that any one of these expressions is employed without difficulty by members of the same tribe. The same happens with "quió," "tzó," "chó"; for example: "doe" can be "tzonaj," "quionáj."

C
721

Each nation of Indians has its own territory and will go to war over the smallest patch of land just as we would. The land is also subdivided among the tribes of one nation and these may not overstep their bounds without causing war. These wars are very frequent for the many reasons set down elsewhere and because of the marauding spirit which dominates the Indians -- thus it is that whenever they learn that a tribe [174] has become rich, for one reason or another, in animals or

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

Introduction.

The vast alluvial lowland commonly known under the name of *El Gran Chaco*, is situated in the heart of South America, being bounded in the east by the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, in the west by the eastern cordilleras of the Bolivian Andes, and in the north and south approximately by latitudes 20° and 30° South respectively. Politically this territory is divided between the republics Argentine, Paraguay, and Bolivia, but the boundaries between Paraguay and Bolivia have long been uncertain owing to the fact that the interior parts of the Chaco are still very little known and practically no-man's land. In fact, northern Chaco has up till now remained a white spot on the map of South America. The very name of Chaco has been much disputed, but this question may now be regarded as definitely settled. Chaco is a Spanish form of the Quichua name *chacu*, 'hunting', 'chase'. The word has reference to the great hunting expeditions which, as we know, were annually arranged by the Incas, and on which thousands of Indians were employed as drivers. The name *chacu* was later applied to the Indians who devoted themselves to this kind of chase, as well as to the tracts where these hunts took place.[1] The Incas, of course, only knew a small part of the immense territory which is now called Chaco, more strictly speaking the forest-clad slopes of the eastern cordilleras as well as the adjacent plains, regions which formerly were and in parts still are extremely rich in all kinds of game. The interior regions, particularly east of Pilcomayo, inhabited by savage Indians, were unknown to the Incas and were not explored until our own days.

The climate in the Gran Chaco is on the whole subtropical, but subject to great variations, a fact that accounts for the different character of the vegetation in different parts of the country. In the west, where

[1]) See Enrique de Gandia, *Historia del Gran Chaco*. Madrid, 1930, pp. 7 sqq.

[p. 1]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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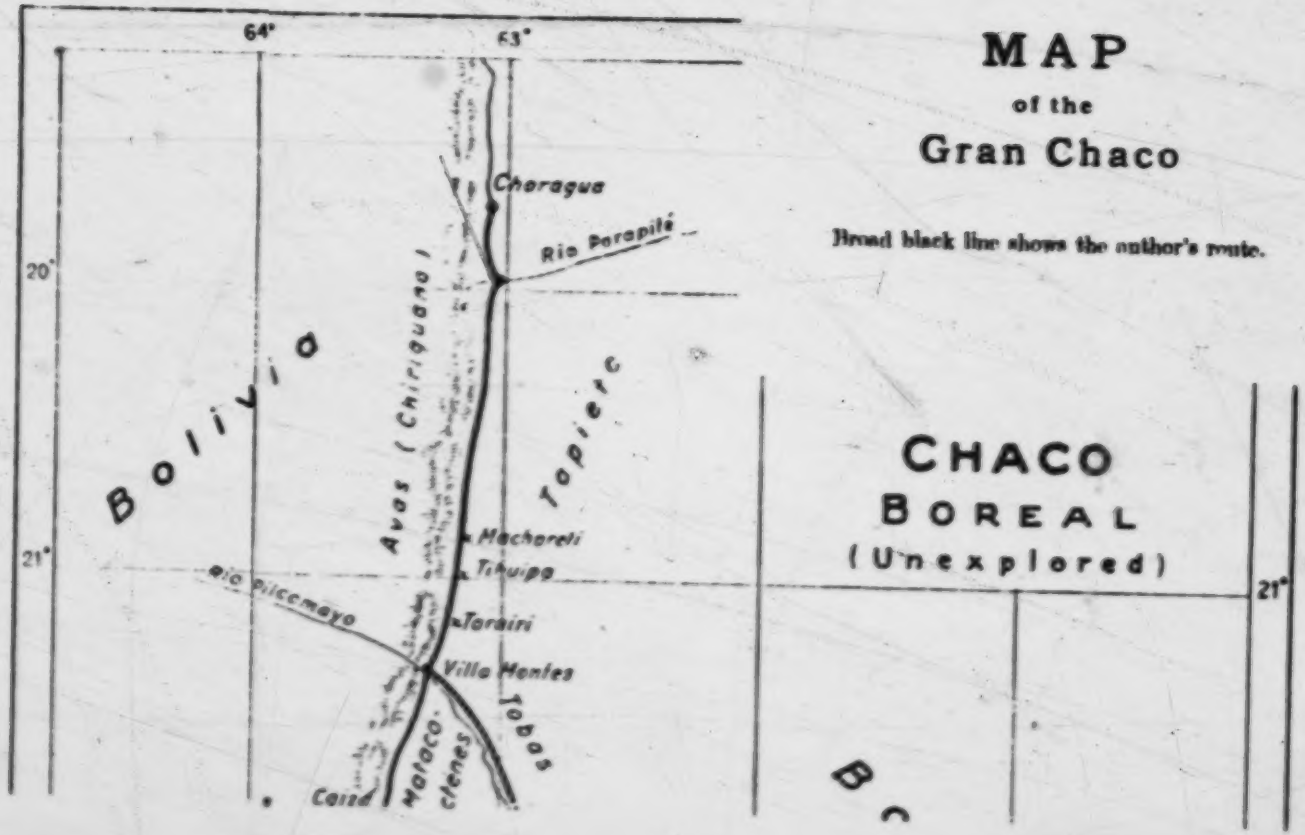
MAP
of the
Gran Chaco

Broad black line shows the author's route.



[End Map (A)]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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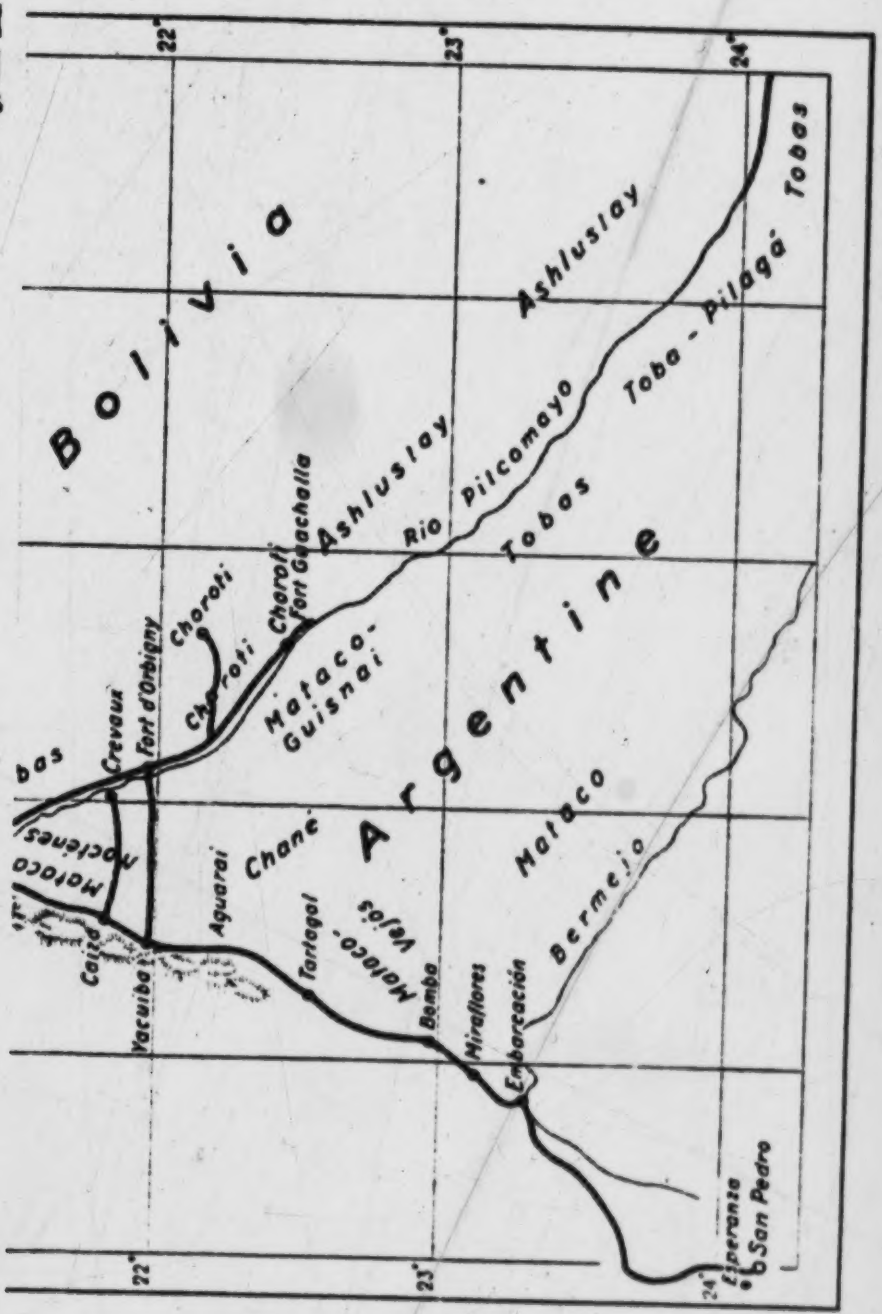

[End Map (B)]

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

Mataco Marriage

By Nizls Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *cwagwatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aleja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *ewatsha;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

/319/

Matacos or Noctenes

M
●131 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank
648 of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to tine, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M
797 A group of these Indians in times pas formed a part of
179 the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M
131 These Indians are very numerous andin small groups extend
197 as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally
648 different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, al-
T though they maintain friendly relations wth the Toba, to whom they
186 are considered to be inferior.

Their physiognomy is overly languil; sadness can be read
M in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they
181 are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness;
578 they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations
273 the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M
273
[171]

M
[243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make meadfrom other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M
181 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very
721 warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit
648 when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 104 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

6: Nordenskiöld--156 E-5 (1908-1909) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano SF10

Mataco SI 7

Choroti SK6

Chane SF8

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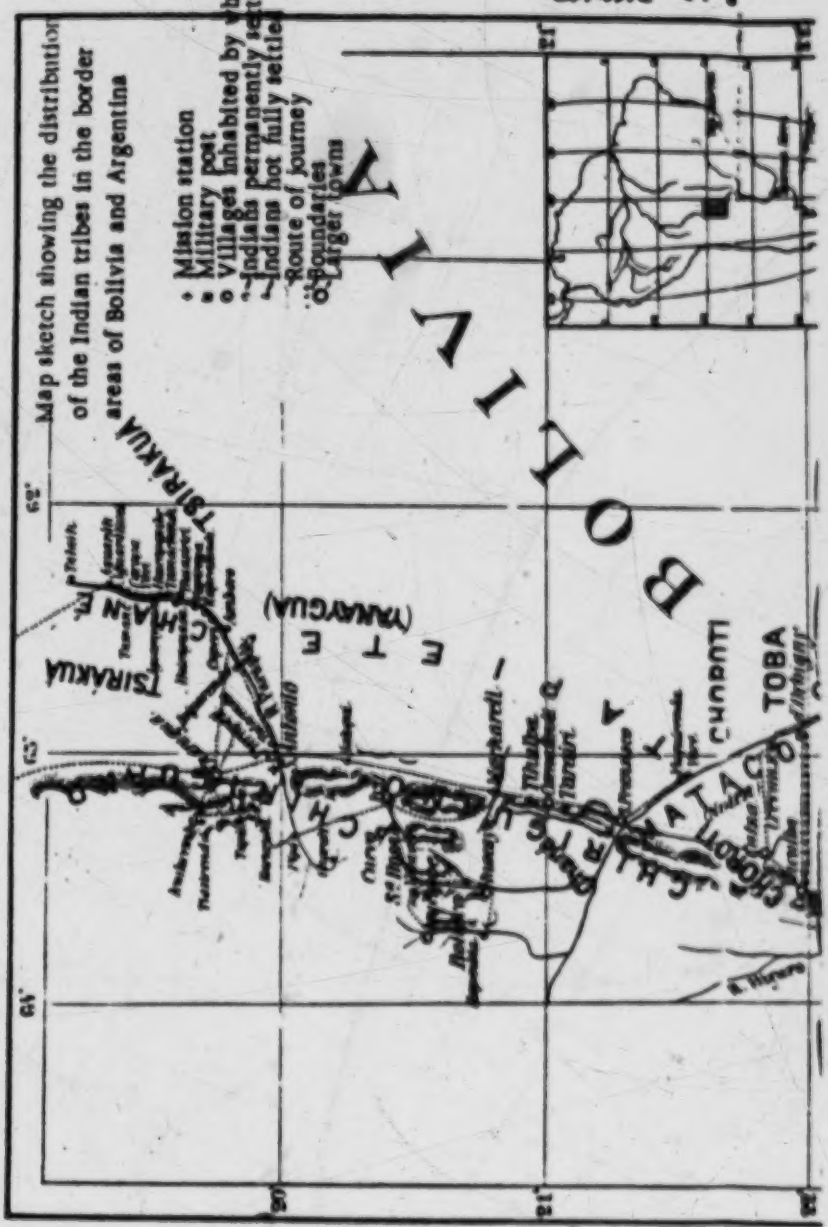

[End Map,(A)]

E: Nordenskiöld--157 E-5 (1908-1909) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano SF/C
NaTaco SF 7
Chorotí SK E
Chaqué SF3

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4

Mataco SI7

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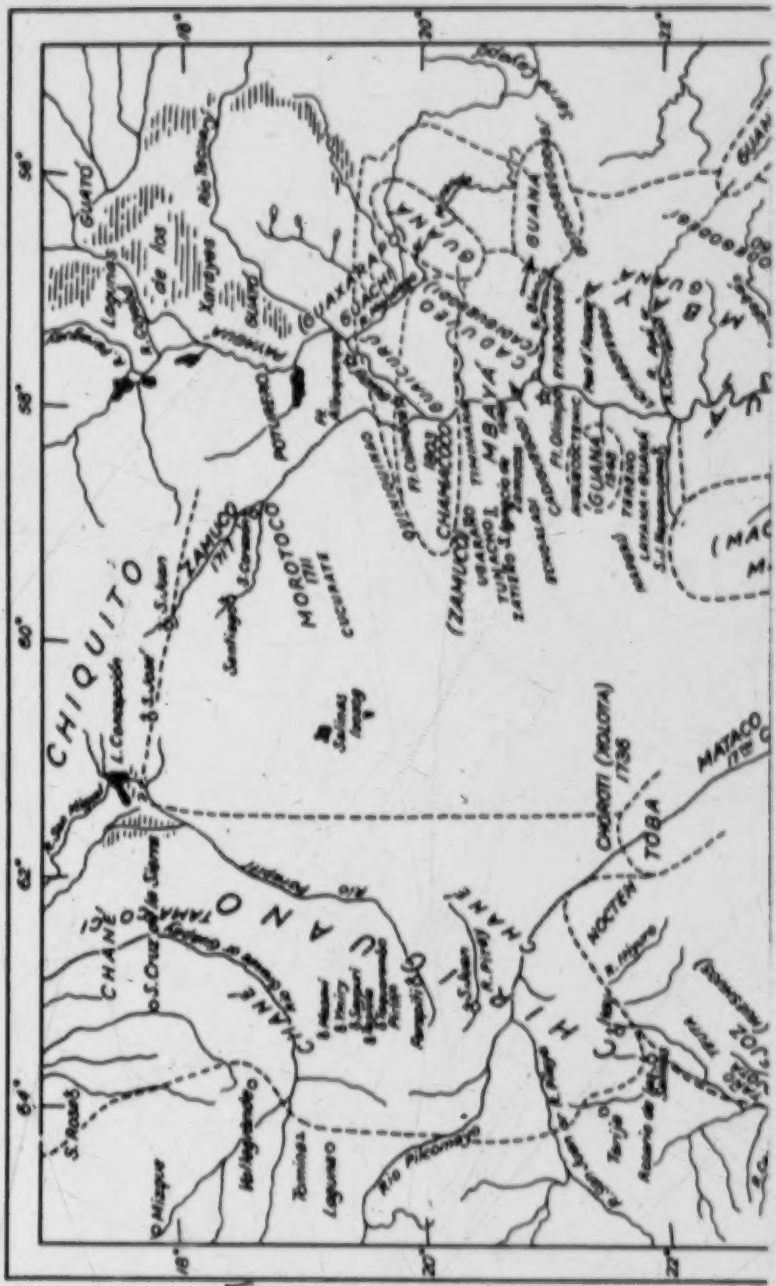

[facing p. 198 (A)]

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Mataco SI7

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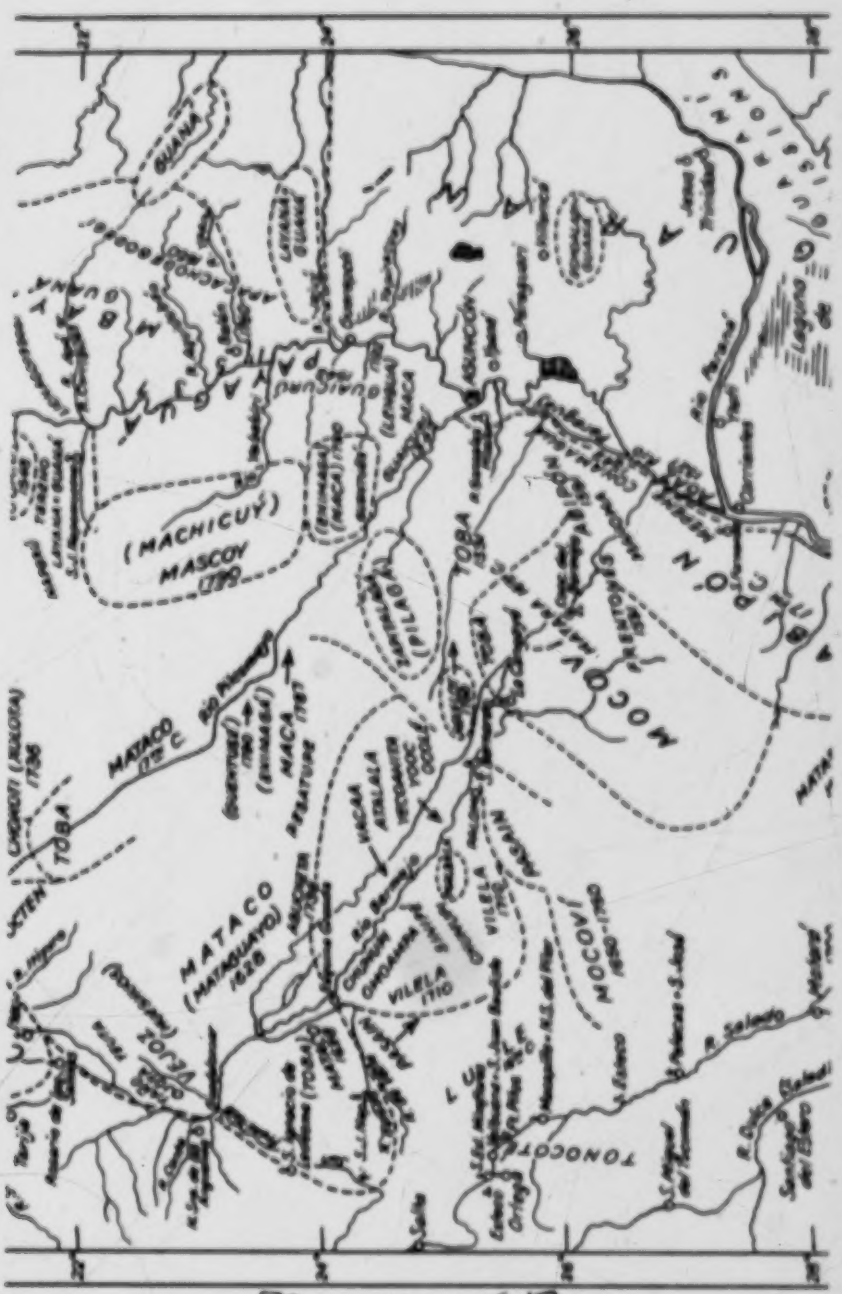

[Facing p. 198(B)]

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Mataco SI7

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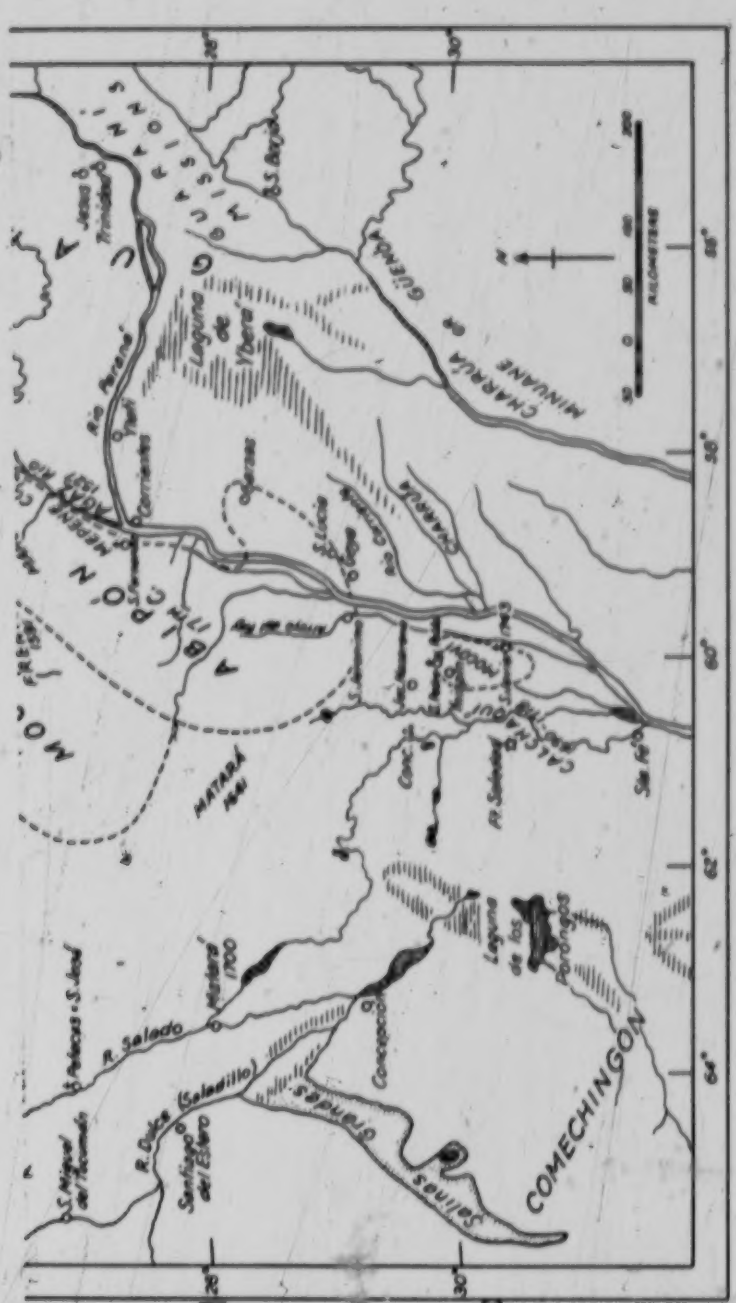
Laguna de Yberá
Río Paraná
Corrientes
Esteros
S. Lucía
Río Corrientes
Río Guayquiraró
Río Negro
Río Miriñay
Río Aguapey
Río Santa Lucía
Río Batel
Río Empedrado
Río Lavalle
Río Mocoretá
Río Ayuí Grande
Río Ayuí Chico
Río Gualeguay
Río Gualeguaychú
Río Uruguay
Río Arapey
Río Daymán
Río Queguay
Río Negro
Río Yí
Río Santa Lucía
Río de la Plata
Río Paraguay
Río Pilcomayo
Río Bermejo
Río Salado
Río Dulce (Salado)
Río Juramento
Río Pasaje
Río Urueña
Río Carcarañá
Río Tercero
Río Cuarto
Río Quinto
Río Chadileo
Río Colorado
Río Negro
Río Limay
Río Neuquén
Río Agrio
Río Barrancas
Río Grande
Río Diamante
Río Atuel
Río Tunuyán
Río Mendoza
Río Desaguadero
Río Salado
Río Chico

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Introduction.

The vast alluvial lowland commonly known under the name of *El Gran Chaco*, is situated in the heart of South America, being bounded in the east by the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, in the west by the eastern cordilleras of the Bolivian Andes, and in the north and south approximately by latitudes 20° and 30° South respectively. Politically this territory is divided between the republics Argentine, Paraguay, and Bolivia, but the boundaries between Paraguay and Bolivia have long been uncertain owing to the fact that the interior parts of the Chaco are still very little known and practically no-man's land. In fact, northern Chaco has up till now remained a white spot on the map of South America. The very name of Chaco has been much disputed, but this question may now be regarded as definitely settled. Chaco is a Spanish form of the Quichua name *chacu*, 'hunting', 'chase'. The word has reference to the great hunting expeditions which, as we know, were annually arranged by the Incas, and on which thousands of Indians were employed as drivers. The name *chacu* was later applied to the Indians who devoted themselves to this kind of chase, as well as to the tracts where these hunts took place.[1]) The Incas, of course, only knew a small part of the immense territory which is now called Chaco, more strictly speaking the forest-clad slopes of the eastern cordilleras as well as the adjacent plains, regions which formerly were and in parts still are extremely rich in all kinds of game. The interior regions, particularly east of Pilcomayo, inhabited by savage Indians, were unknown to the Incas and were not explored until our own days.

The climate in the Gran Chaco is on the whole subtropical, but subject to great variations, a fact that accounts for the different character of the vegetation in different parts of the country. In the west, where

[1]) See Enrique de Gandia, *Historia del Gran Chaco*. Madrid, 1930, pp. 7 sqq.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable, we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourliea decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sisyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called »summer» in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

●132 tains the rivers may at that time rise to a height of twenty feet above the normal, and in low-lying tracts inundations are by no means uncommon. The temperature may then frequently rise to 110° F. in the shade. The forests abound in algaroba and other wild fruits, and the natives devote themselves to the cultivation of their modest fields of pumpkin, water melon, manioc, and maize. But at the end of March a remarkable change is noticeable. The thunderstorms accompanied by showers of rain, which during the summer time are comparatively frequent, cease from then on, and a season of drought which lasts for several months sets in. Whereas in the summer the hot north wind is prevalent, the cold south wind is the rule during the dry season, and is one of the causes of the remarkable fall of temperature then taking place. In the early hours of the morning it may fall below freezing point, and the traveller who has spent the night in his open tent may, to his astonishment, find the water pools covered with a thin layer of ice. But about noon the temperature may again, if the sun shines, rise to an almost summerlike warmth.

136 Animal life in the Chaco is much the same as in tropical South America, but shows certain characteristic forms. In the pampas regions large flocks of the South American ostrich (*Rhea americana*) are frequently seen, rapidly taking flight at the approach of a party of equestrians. The Indians eagerly hunt this shy bird both on account of its flesh, which is highly appreciated as food, and its feathers which are used as ornaments on festival occasions. On the edge of forests large troops of peccaries (*Dicotyles labiatus* and *D. torquatus*) as well as deer are frequently encountered, whereas marshy regions are haunted by the tapir (*Tapirus americanus*). Occasionally a specimen of the great anteater (*Myrmecophaga jubata*) is seen: including the long, bushy tail this peculiar animal measures about seven feet; the snout is very long and pointed and on the back it has a bristly mane; the forefeet are strongly developed and provided with terrible claws with which the animal tears up the belly of its assailant. Next to the jaguar, the anteater is the most dangerous animal in the Chaco, and the Indians allege that it is a match even for this beast.

Of the carnivora the jaguar is the most important; it is fairly common especially in the cattle districts and attains here a larger size than in any other part of South America. The animal is rarely seen, but its tracks are often encountered on the path of the forest, and at night its howling is often heard as it roams about looking for prey. The traveller

/216 cont./

755 535 they approached the sick woman and passed the poncho over her head; next they ran to the exit and shook it. They repeated this maneuver several times, then completely enveloped the woman in the poncho, and a medicine man began to rub her through the cloth. Everyone was singing but some were not dancing. After some time the poncho was taken off, carried at a running pace to the exit, and thrown outside. The dance was resumed; an assistant threw some water on the ground, and the chief medicine man then stopped the dance again. He sat next to the sick woman, covering himself completely with a large black blanket, and began to speak with the illness; during this time the man who was watering the ground carried up a bucket of water and, with the help of a medicine man, washed the face, head, and body of the sick woman, who was turned with her feet toward the passage made in the crossbars, and a path was traced with water from her feet to the passage. The chief medicine man got up and the dance was resumed with renewed [302] ardor. During this dance the assistant moistened the shoulders of the male dancers, while an old man painted the faces of the women red, giving them two circles on the cheek bones and a streak along the nose. At the same time one medicine man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a red cloth. At the end of a certain time the sick woman lay down, the dance continued, taking on a threatening character, and then suddenly the people appeared satisfied, having undoubtedly obtained a momentary success. The ceremony stopped and was resumed after an hour.

Note

[64] [32] According to the medicine men with whom I had a chance to talk about these two sick women, they were suffering from "sickness in the chest," /217/ easily explicable by a sharp atmospheric drop of almost 25° in 24 hours.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

must then be on the alert and have his horses and mules well secured. 136
The settlers generally hunt the jaguar by means of hounds, of which of course a great number must be used. Badly attacked by its assailants, the beast at last seeks refuge in climbing a tree, where it is generally easily shot.

The natives stand in great fear of the jaguar, looking upon it as the 825
incarnation of an evil spirit, and the beast does in fact seem to have far less respect for the Indian than for a white man. In the religion and mythology of the Chaco Indians the jaguar plays an important part.

The puma is rare, and the same may be said of the maned wolf (*Canis* 136
jubatus) which is reported to exist in the Chaco, for I never saw or heard of any. The fox is very common on the plains, and its howling or barking is one of the characteristic sounds interrupting the silence of night. Of birds there is no great variety in the Chaco. Doves, wild turkeys, and small parrots are, in addition to ostriches, the birds most commonly seen in the pampas regions and forests. Only at the big lagoons, found here and there in the interior of the country, may one notice a rich bird-life, especially during the dry season. Ducks of different kinds, white and yellow herons, storks, and other aquatic birds in countless numbers give life to these places, whither also many animals of the forest descend to allay their thirst.

Venomous snakes, even rattlesnakes, are quite common on the plains, especially during the dry season. Both in the river Pilcomayo and in the lagoons alligators are found, although in the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco they are not as numerous as in the Rio Paraguay. The rivers moreover abound in fish, and all the Pilcomayo tribes live mainly by fishing.

Insect-life is very rich in summer-time. Different kinds of mosquitoes, crickets, large beetles, and especially the *Cicada* with its shrill whistling, shortly before sunset and at night fill the air with their weird sounds, innumerable croaking frogs joining in the concert. These manifestations of lower animal life, as they are perceived at sunset, are, I believe, the things that most impress a traveller in the Chaco.

Although mosquitoes are numerous and troublesome in the summer, the climate is on the whole healthy. Malarial fever does not occur, except [164]
when it is occasionally introduced by settlers or other white men. Rheumatism and catarrhs are the ailments from which the natives most commonly suffer.

The scarcity of water has been the greatest obstacle to the explora- 133●
tion of the Chaco. In the Bolivian Chaco the traveller preferably keeps to

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

●133 the river Pilcomayo, following its sinuous course, and this is practically the only way known to white people hitherto. An explorer who undertook to penetrate at random into the interior of the unknown country east of the river, without being accompained by Indian guides, would be almost sure to perish from thirst within a few days. Many promising expeditions into the Chaco have ended disastrously in this way. Only the natives know where the few water places are to be found. Generally these consist of small pools, the stinking brown or green water of which seems almost undrinkable to a white man; but the explorer soon finds it good enough even for him and it will save the life both of man and beast.

648 Another danger to the explorer is the hostility of the savage natives who inhabit the country. This aspect of the Chaco tribes has become almost proverbial owing to the fact that several explorers have met a disastrous end at the hands of the savage Indians. In our own days the best known of these unfortunate explorers are Crevaux, Ibareta, and Boggiani, of whom the first mentioned was killed by the Toba Indians on the banks of the Rio Pilcomayo, at the place which still bears his name. Several expeditions have tried to explore the country, following the course of the Pilcomayo down to its confluence with the Rio Paraguay, but the first which succeeded was the Bolivian expediton under D. Campos in 1883. The interior of the Chaco, however, is still to a great extent unknown, and ethnographic exploration of this interesting country did not begin until a few decades ago.

114 The above description of the Chaco has particular reference to the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco and more especially to the region on both sides of the river Pilcomayo, of which I have acquired personal knowledge. My ethnological studies have in fact been limited to the most important of the tribes inhabiting that region, tribes which, when I first visited them, were very imperfectly known. The Pilcomayo is the largest of the few affluents that the great river Paraguay receives from the west. For the main part of its course the river flows through very little known country, and the tribes that have settled on its banks or roam about on the grassy plains or in the thickets of the interior still live completely — or at any rate did live at the time when I visited them — in a state of nature. The most important of these tribes are the Mataco, the Choroti, the Tobas, and the Ashluslay, who live partly on the right (Argentine), partly on the left (Bolivian) side of the river. The Mataco, the Choroti, and the Ashluslay, who linguistically are closely related to each other, form a group of their own. The Tobas, although a typical Chaco tribe, both

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

114 The way which leads from Embarcación up to Bolivia is what is called a *camino carretero*, a broad road suitable for big carts drawn by mules. It is illustrative of the primitive means of communication in Bolivia that nearly all articles of commerce had to be transported along this road up to such distant places as Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Mojos in the heart of Bolivia — a journey which takes months to accomplish. My own nearest goal was a place called Yacuiba, a big village which at that time belonged to Bolivia, but a few years later on was annexed by Argentine. The journey from Embarcación to Yacuiba takes seven days. Embarcación is situated on the bank of the Rio Bermejo, a tributary of the Pilcomayo, and this river had to be crossed, the mules swimming over it. Having a few hours later passed the small village Miraflores, we arrived at the open plains varied with small forests which here form the westernmost 114 part of the enormous territory of the Gran Chaco. These regions are al- 361 most uninhabited; only isolated *tolderias* (villages) of the Mataco Indians are found, from which occasionally we could hear the beating of drums or the incantations of the medicine-men, when they were trying to call forth rain or to drive away evil disease-bringing spirits. The scarcity of water in fact was great, for although it was the beginning of the rainy season very little rain had as yet fallen, and at the halting-places it was generally difficult to find water for the beasts. In a place called Bomba, inhabited by a lonely settler, we had to pay for the drinking-water, which was brought from a distant pool near the cordilleras rising in the west.

About midway between Embarcación and Yacuiba lies the village 114 Tartagal, which at that time only consisted of a couple of poor houses. In 133 this region nature entirely changes its aspect. The traveller, having previously marched for days through open plains and thickets, suddenly enters a virgin forest of almost tropical grandeur, where the great variety of climbers and creepers, covering not only the giant trees but also bushes and plants, especially attracts attention. This is a type of scenery which is only met with in the vicinity of the Andes, never in the interior of the Chaco. We had to march a couple of days through this interesting primeval forest before we again came out on the plains. Just north of Tartagal there is the small village Aguaray — like all villages in this region, rather a group of primitive ranches — whence it is only one day's journey to Yacuiba.

Yacuiba was formerly a place of bad repute, being a resort of criminals and adventurers of the kind so frequently met with in places far away from the centres of civilization in Argentine and Bolivia. At the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

time of my stay in Yacuiba conditions were much improved, and the village has since made considerable progress, chiefly owing to some foreign commercial houses which have established themselves there. Yacuiba has now several hundred inhabitants, among whom there is a small number of Europeans. The village became my head-quarters for the whole time that I travelled in the Chaco. One of the foreigners, Don Carlos Holzer, did me great service in helping me to get peons and to prepare for my expeditions into different parts of the country.

There are two roads leading from Yacuiba to the river Pilcomayo; the one, passing through the village of Caiza, takes the traveller to the small place called Crevaux; the other leading directly along the line at the 22nd degree of latitude to the Bolivian fort d'Orbigny. Both these places are situated close to the river, the former a few leagues to the north of the latter. On my first expedition to the Pilcomayo in November 1911 I took the second road, the one leading to d'Orbigny. From Yacuiba this place can be reached in three days, travelling on horseback. In addition to the riding-mules I had three baggage mules and was accompanied by two peons none of whom had been at the Pilcomayo before. These regions are entirely uninhabited; there are neither settlers nor Indian villages. [133] The way goes partly through deep forests, partly through arid deserts and — near the river — through grassy plains. The right (Argentine) bank of the Pilcomayo is extremely flat; it is difficult to imagine more monotonous scenery.

At d'Orbigny a small body of ten Bolivian soldiers commanded by a lieutenant was garrisoned and I had counted on their assistance at the crossing of the Pilcomayo, which in the rainy season is very broad and rapid. The fort, however, turned out to be situated on the opposite side of the river and was not even visible from the spot where we were. No human being could be seen on whom it would have been possible to call for assistance. At last we caught sight of two Indians who had swum over the river from the opposite bank evidently for the sake of fishing on the Argentine side where the water is lower. They were Toba Indians who knew enough Spanish to inform us that there was absolutely no canoe to be had either on this or the other side of the river, and that all must cross it by swimming, even the mules. Since the Pilcomayo at this place has a breadth of nearly one mile, it seemed by no means a trifle to cross it with the baggage and the mules. Happily the rainy season had not yet properly begun, so the river was comparatively low. The Indians offered to help us take over the beasts and for this purpose went in search

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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The left (Argentine) side of the Pilcomayo, where the country is extremely flat.

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On the right (Bolivian) side the Pilcomayo in some places forms high walls (*barrancas*).

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

●133

River scenery from the middle course of the Pilcomayo.

The Pilcomayo during an inundation.

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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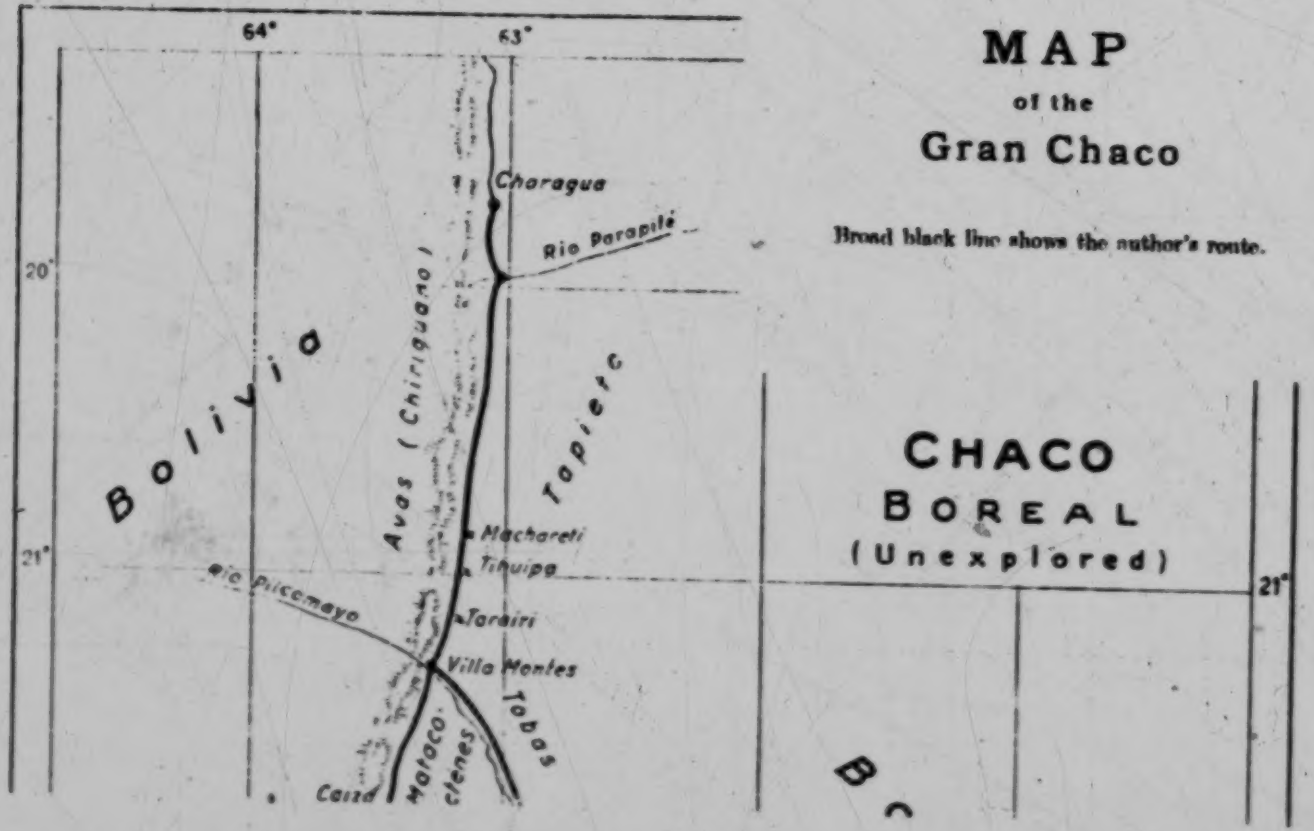
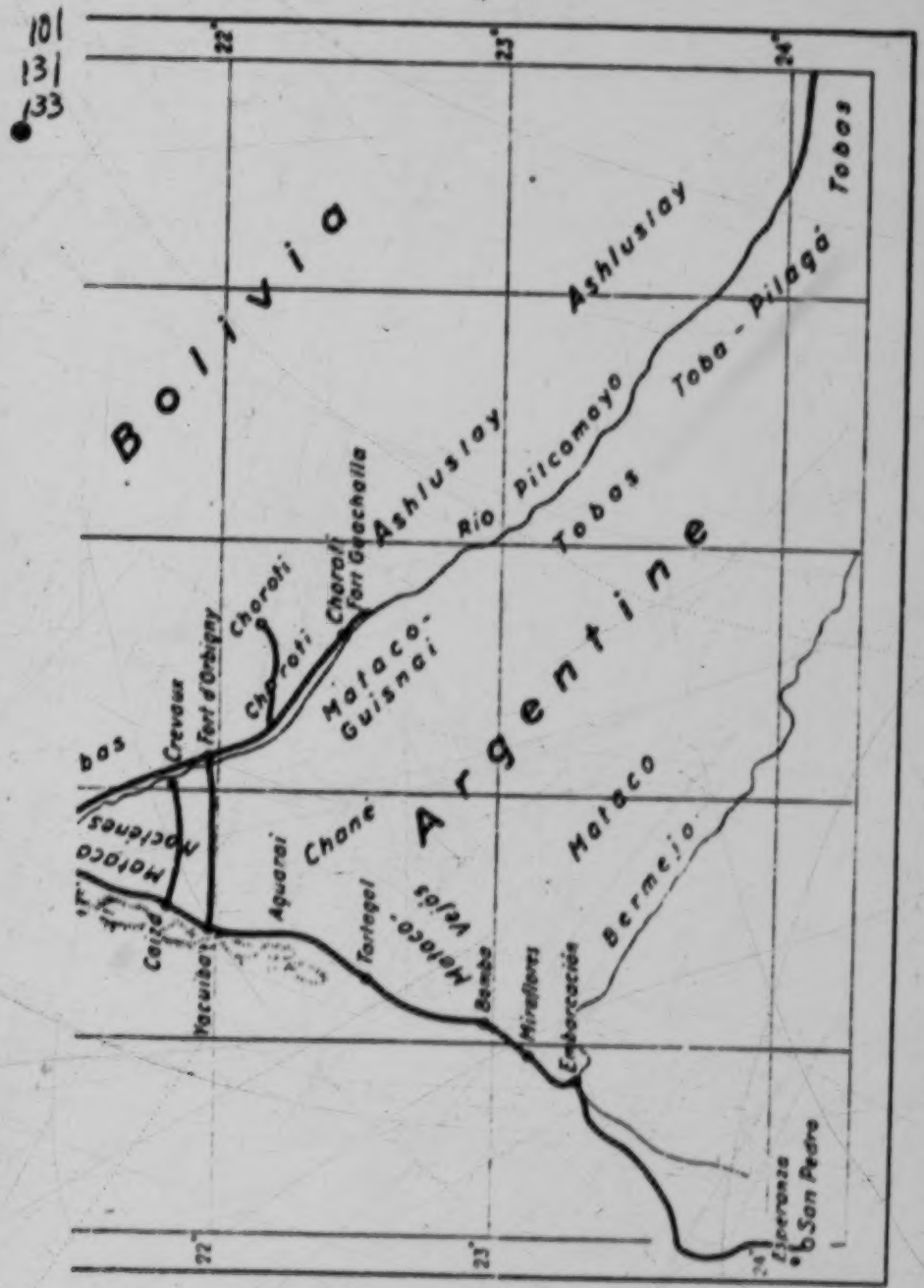
MAP
of the
Gran Chaco

Broad black line shows the author's route.



[End Map (A)]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7



[End Map (B)]

6: Nordenskiöld--156 E-5 (1908-1909) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano SF10
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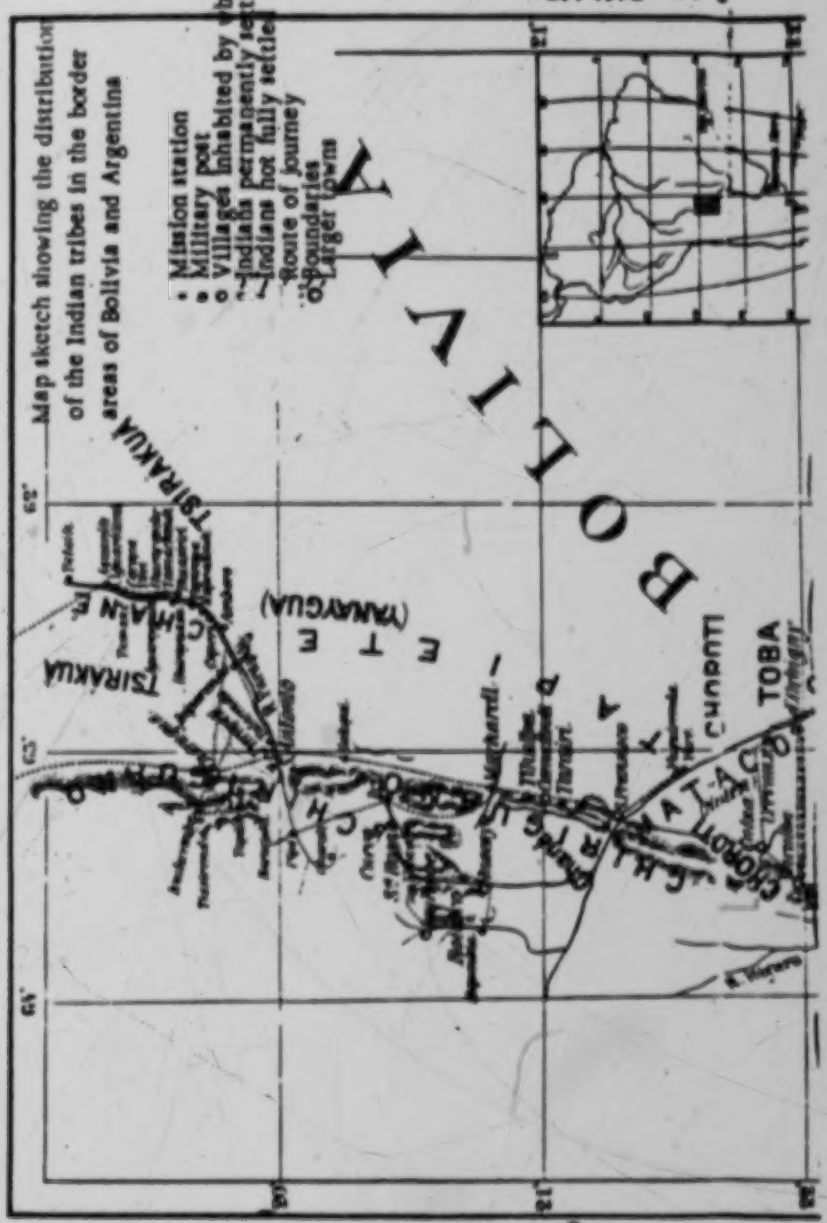

[End Map,(A)]

End Map (B)

C: Bordenskiöld--157 E-6 (1908-1909) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano SF/C Matacos SZ 70 Choroti, Ske Chaco SFJ

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Mataco SI7

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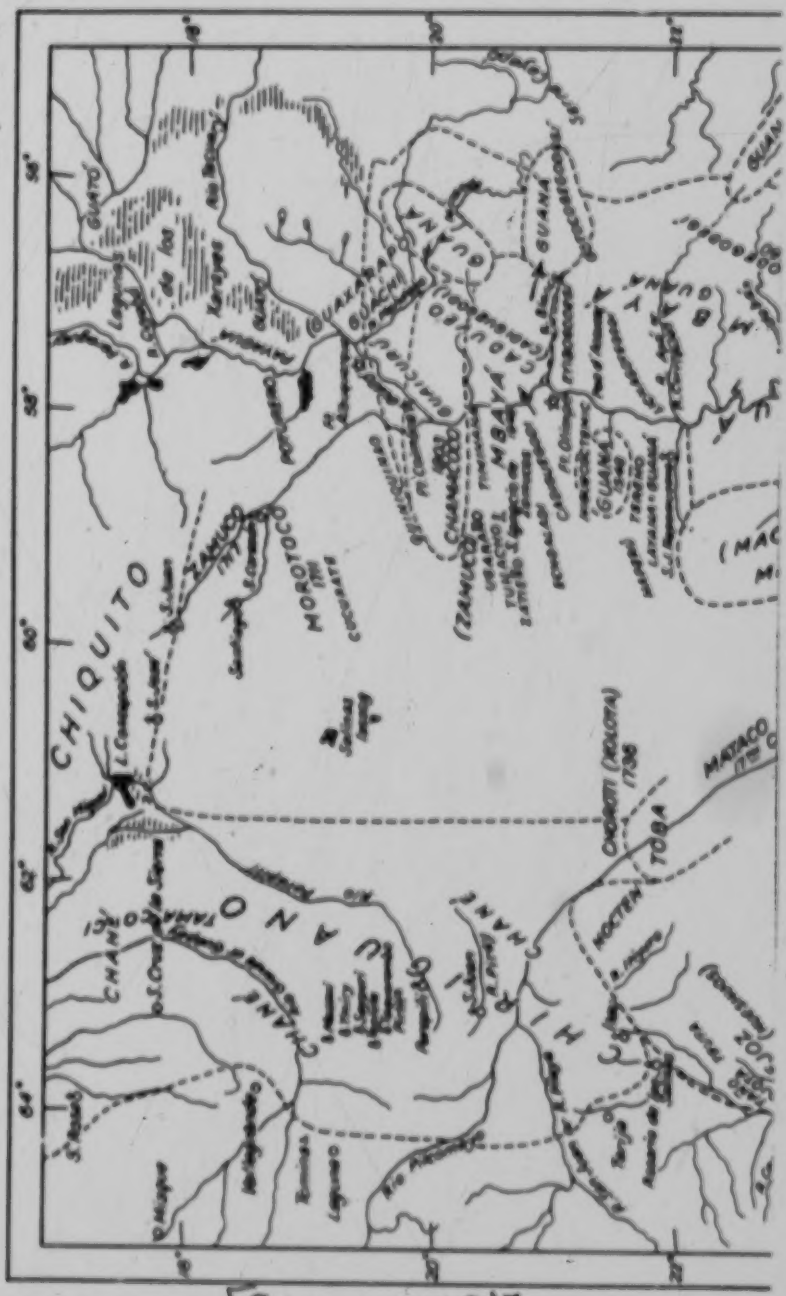
CHIQUITO
MATACO
TOBA
GUANA
CHANÉ
CHAMACOCO
MOROTOCO
ZAMUCO
GUAYCURU
CHORETI (XOLOTA)
NOCTEN
CHANÉ
CHAMACOCO
GUANÁ
GUANÁ
GUANÁ

Z: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 S14 Abipon S14
Mataco S7

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181
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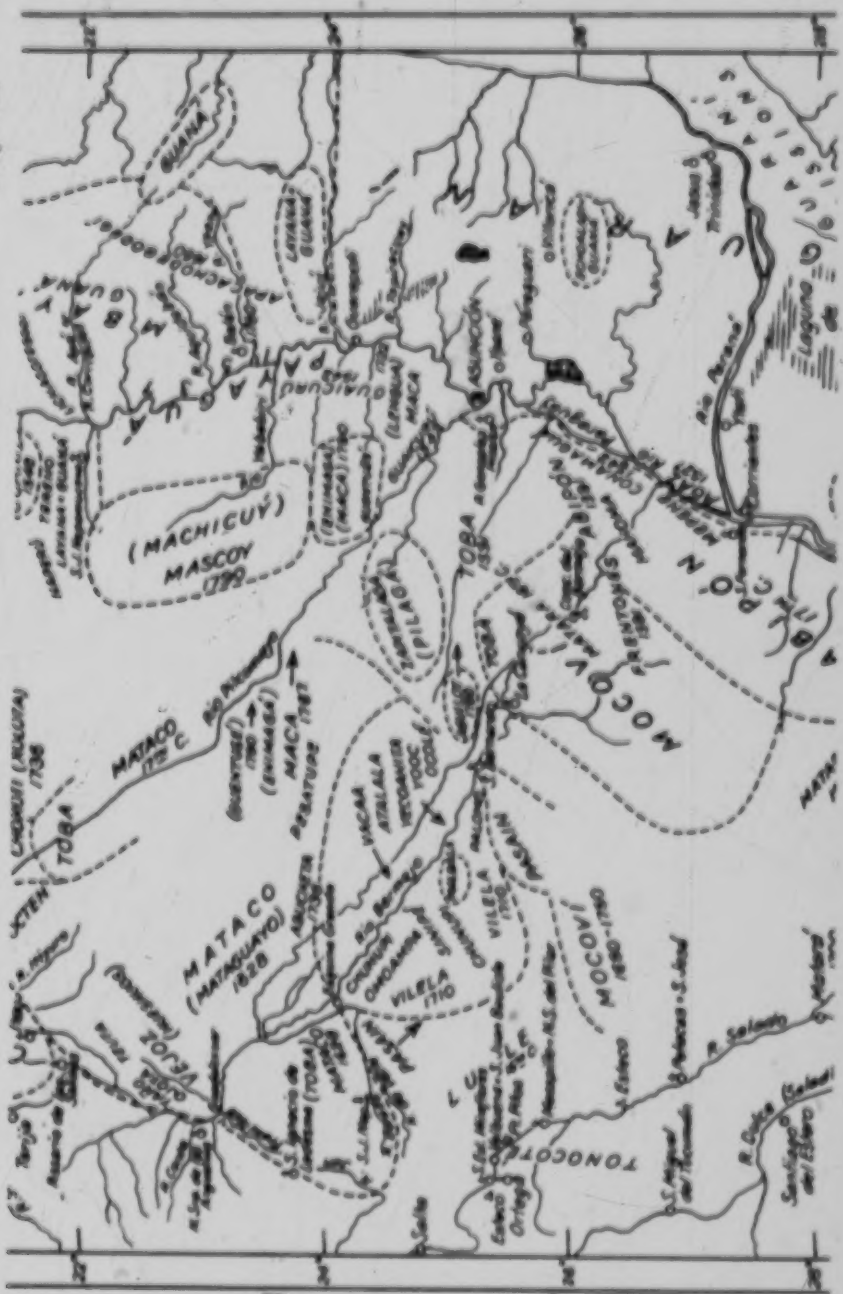

[Facing p. 198(B)]

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Mataco SI7

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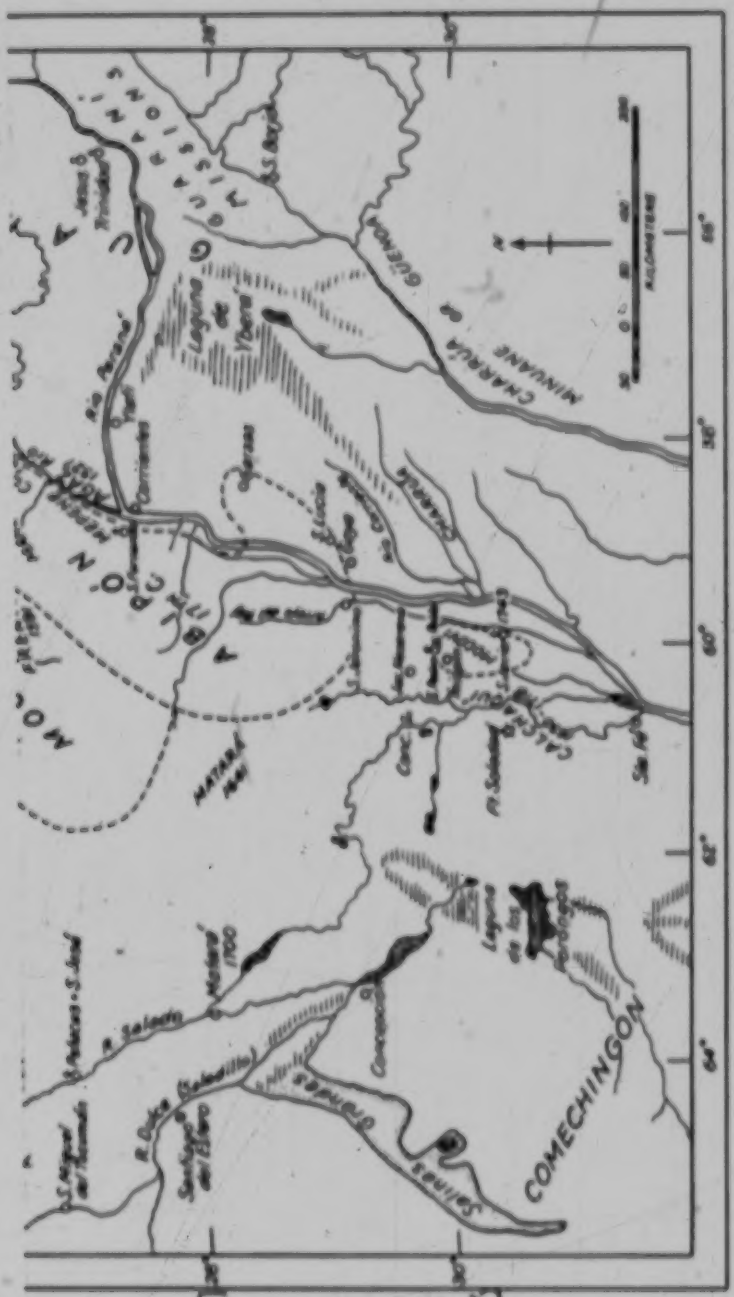
COMECHINGON
CHARRUA
MINUANE
GUENOA
Laguna de los Porongos
Laguna Iberá
Laguna Mirinay
Laguna Limpia
Laguna Oscura
Laguna Blanca
Laguna Salada
Laguna Chiquita
Laguna Grande
Laguna Verde
Laguna Escondida
Laguna Negra
Laguna Pelada
Laguna Colorada
Laguna Amarilla
Laguna Seca
Laguna Larga
Laguna Redonda
Laguna Honda
Laguna Oscura
Laguna Blanca
Laguna Salada
Laguna Chiquita
Laguna Grande
Laguna Verde
Laguna Escondida
Laguna Negra
Laguna Pelada
Laguna Colorada
Laguna Amarilla
Laguna Seca
Laguna Larga
Laguna Redonda
Laguna Honda
Río Paraná
Río Paraguay
Río Salado
Río Dulce (Salavina)
Río Pilcomayo
Río Bermejo
Río Grande
Río Negro
Río Colorado
Río Salado
Río Dulce

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

132 the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable,
137 we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these
●134 kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

262 From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same
273 time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourliea decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sisyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

314 A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

132 It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called »summer» in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

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The women take up a somewhat strange posture with their hands when they are standing. As they have no pockets to put them in, or fan with which to occupy them, or what have you, they place them upon their breasts which serve as supports for their arms which together rest upon them.

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The women, along with the men, have abundant, coarse, straight hair. They wear it rather long but not as long as they might, for it is shortened by wearing it in an unkempt fashion (which serves them as protection for eyes and forehead against the sun) and also by cutting.

They cut their hair, that on their faces as well as that on their scalps, with the jaw of a fish called palometa, which is armed with extraordinarily sharp teeth placed in two rows. The upper teeth dovetail exactly with the lower.

The palometa, the raya (ray--Translator) and the yacaré (alligator--Translator) are the scourge of those who bathe in this river and the lakes or pools which are fed by it. The palometa snaps, tears

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The married woman is faithful to her husband by inclination, education and fear. There are tales of terrible revenges wreaked by husbands upon their unfaithful wives, over whom they have power of life and death. While they are single they can be and often are free in their ways. It cannot be doubted that the whites attract their interest, if matters of racial difference do not intervene, for the poorest white is always in a position to give better presents than is the richest chief.

These women love decorations and clothing, but have no use for skirts or corsets. They wrap themselves from the waist down in a blanket, and hold it up with a belt or cord which is hidden behind the fold of cloth. In addition to this they know how to distribute these rags in such a way as to accentuate their good figure and yet at the same time not encumber themselves, a skill not to be expected on first seeing them. Their dress consists of robes, and when they have any they put them all on, be it winter or summer, partly because of the nomadic existence they lead and partly because they like to do so. One might say that the saying: what wards off cold also wards off heat, is particularly applicable to them.

Both men and women love bright colors (particularly red) and variety, but they also like white cloth. When they put on any garment they always do so in such a way as to leave one arm free. The women have a high regard for the kind of shirts which we wear.

The women make their own ornaments out of leather and broken shells, achieving a certain elegance of form, though with a greater or lesser degree of rusticity. They wear, from childhood, a sort of

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

132 tains the rivers may at that time rise to a height of twenty feet above the normal, and in low-lying tracts inundations are by no means uncommon. The temperature may then frequently rise to 110° F. in the shade. The forests abound in algaroba and other wild fruits, and the natives devote themselves to the cultivation of their modest fields of pumpkin, water melon, manioc, and maize. But at the end of March a remarkable change is noticeable. The thunderstorms accompanied by showers of rain, which during the summer time are comparatively frequent, cease from then on, and a season of drought which lasts for several months sets in. Whereas in the summer the hot north wind is prevalent, the cold south wind is the rule during the dry season, and is one of the causes of the remarkable fall of temperature then taking place. In the early hours of the morning it may fall below freezing point, and the traveller who has spent the night in his open tent may, to his astonishment, find the water pools covered with a thin layer of ice. But about noon the temperature may again, if the sun shines, rise to an almost summerlike warmth.

●136 Animal life in the Chaco is much the same as in tropical South America, but shows certain characteristic forms. In the pampas regions large flocks of the South American ostrich (*Rhea americana*) are frequently seen, rapidly taking flight at the approach of a party of equestrians. The Indians eagerly hunt this shy bird both on account of its flesh, which is highly appreciated as food, and its feathers which are used as ornaments on festival occasions. On the edge of forests large troops of peccaries (*Dicotyles labiatus* and *D. torquatus*) as well as deer are frequently encountered, whereas marshy regions are haunted by the tapir (*Tapirus americanus*). Occasionally a specimen of the great ant-eater (*Myrmecophaga jubata*) is seen: including the long, bushy tail this peculiar animal measures about seven feet; the snout is very long and pointed and on the back it has a bristly mane; the forefeet are strongly developed and provided with terrible claws with which the animal tears up the belly of its assailant. Next to the jaguar, the ant-eater is the most dangerous animal in the Chaco, and the Indians allege that it is a match even for this beast.

Of the carnivora the jaguar is the most important; it is fairly common especially in the cattle districts and attains here a larger size than in any other part of South America. The animal is rarely seen, but its tracks are often encountered on the path of the forest, and at night its howling is often heard as it roams about looking for prey. The traveller

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

must then be on the alert and have his horses and mules well secured. 136
The settlers generally hunt the jaguar by means of hounds, of which of course a great number must be used. Badly attacked by its assailants, the beast at last seeks refuge in climbing a tree, where it is generally easily shot.

The natives stand in great fear of the jaguar, looking upon it as the 125
incarnation of an evil spirit, and the beast does in fact seem to have far less respect for the Indian than for a white man. In the religion and mythology of the Chaco Indians the jaguar plays an important part.

The puma is rare, and the same may be said of the maned wolf (*Canis* 136
jubatus) which is reported to exist in the Chaco, for I never saw or heard of any. The fox is very common on the plains, and its howling or barking is one of the characteristic sounds interrupting the silence of night. Of birds there is no great variety in the Chaco. Doves, wild turkeys, and small parrots are, in addition to ostriches, the birds most commonly seen in the pampas regions and forests. Only at the big lagoons, found here and there in the interior of the country, may one notice a rich bird-life, especially during the dry season. Ducks of different kinds, white and yellow herons, storks, and other aquatic birds in countless numbers give life to these places, whither also many animals of the forest descend to allay their thirst.

Venomous snakes, even rattlesnakes, are quite common on the plains, especially during the dry season. Both in the river Pilcomayo and in the lagoons alligators are found, although in the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco they are not as numerous as in the Rio Paraguay. The rivers moreover abound in fish, and all the Pilcomayo tribes live mainly by fishing.

Insect-life is very rich in summer-time. Different kinds of mosquitoes, crickets, large beetles, and especially the *Cicada* with its shrill whistling, shortly before sunset and at night fill the air with their weird sounds, innumerable croaking frogs joining in the concert. These manifestations of lower animal life, as they are perceived at sunset, are, I believe, the things that most impress a traveller in the Chaco.

Although mosquitoes are numerous and troublesome in the summer, the climate is on the whole healthy. Malarial fever does not occur, except [64]
when it is occasionally introduced by settlers or other white men. Rheumatism and catarrhs are the ailments from which the natives most commonly suffer.

The scarcity of water has been the greatest obstacle to the explora- 133
tion of the Chaco. In the Bolivian Chaco the traveller preferably keeps to

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At a wedding which is properly celebrated with all the attendant frills there are alcoholic beverages made from the pods of the algarrobo and vinal, and from forest honey -- regarding all of which I shall write in the following chapter. 273 [585]

Chapter VI

Fermented Beverages

Natural Products of Domestic Use

The algarrobo is to these parts what the chestnut tree is to Europe in its usefulness to the people who live in the region. By observation I have found that it grows in the area between one hundred and four hundred meters above sea level and between 30° and 15° of southern latitude, between the mountains and the sea. It does not like dampness, which keeps it from growing even in those places which would otherwise suit it. In dry, hot places I have come upon it even at an elevation of seven hundred meters above sea level, but always in flat country. 137 ●

The algarrobo is found in various situations. Sometimes there are whole forests of this tree only; sometimes it grows in company with others. In my judgment it is the most widely distributed tree in the region and deserves, for this reason, and because of its great importance to have a whole area or forest zone named after it. It is to be found, in fact, growing both in forests rooted in earth built up out of the waters when these lands were raised, and in alluvial soil recently washed down.

The wood of the algarrobo is ideal for most construction purposes (except for roofing) and carpentry, but usually has the drawback of being short. There oozes from the trunk a black resin for which we have no use but the Indians do. The fruit is in the shape of a pod and contains a somewhat sweet flour which is used to make bread and fermented drinks. 137 824

There are in the region three types of algarrobo: the white kind which has pods in color and size similar to our white beans, from which a good beverage is made and the flour of which could be used. The black kind with pods like black eyed peas from which an inferior

drink is made; and the so-called [187] "patay" algarrobo whose pods, like our white beans, are thick and produce a large amount of excellent flour with which bread -- called patay in the Quechua language -- is made. The first two have simple compound leaves, that is, each leaf is made up of pairs of leaflets placed evenly along its axis, with small thorns at the base of each leaf. The third type of algarrobo has complex-compound leaves in which the secondary leaflets are subdivided into many pairs of almost microspoic ones, as occurs in the churqui (Acacia cavenia), and also has thorns between ten and fifteen centimeters long, though not large in girth. 137 824

In order to make patay (bread) which is only made in Santiago and Catamarca in the basin of the Pueblos de Belen, the dry algarrobo pod, ready for grinding, is placed under a hardwood or stone pestle which is moved by a long lever. The pod, thus ground, is turned into flour, but the seeds, which are extraordinarily hard, do not even break. The flour is then sifted, poured and pressed into a pot which has been previously heated by being put out in the sun or near a fire. The pot is now sealed off with fine sand and then again placed in the sun or near a fire for a short while. In ten minutes the patay is ready, for the warming has no other object than to melt the honey contained in the flour in order to make it coalesce into a lump, this lump becoming very hard once the honey cools. Thus they make loaves weighing from four to six pounds and more, which can be packed into saddlebags, slung over the saddle and afford a delicious if somewhat cloying food. The flour is in some ways similar to chestnut flour. A slice of this, impaled on a knife and heated in the fire is a really superb tidbit, both in smell and in taste. Aloja is the Argentine (1) name given to the fermented beverages of that region, 252 273

1. Cacan (?) Ed.

while in Quechua they are called chicha (2), in Mataco; hŭ-ná;

2. Chicha is made from corn. Ed. --
See: Acca and Asua. [?--Translabor]

in Mocovi: nă-ná and nănn-ná; and in Vilela: tsŭc-cué.

It is worth noting that although they are such tipplers, they do 264
not drink anything with their meals, not even water. On board ship the Indian guests we entertained refused all beverages while they were eating. After they had finished eating they preferred to drink water by crouching beside the river and drinking out of one hand.

The Indians are great beggars and yet miserly with their own [609]
possessions where whites are concerned. This is understandable since they are poor.

It occurs to me that I should mention something which, though 142
out of place here, I must set down for fear of forgetting it later: 145

The Indian boys, until they are eight or ten have disproportionately large bellies, so much so that they customarily bind them at the level of the navel. Later on they lose their bloated tummies and grow into well proportioned men.

It seems pertinent to me to say that the algarrobo belongs to 137
our family of the garrobas (Ceratonia silicua) and the botanists know it under the name of Prosopis algarrobo. Its importance is immense in the domestic economy of the savages and country people. It deserves close attention for this reason. The crown grows to some ten meters in diameter but is not very dense, either because of the small number of leaves or because of their shape, yet it affords quite a fair amount of shade. The bark is very rough and is similar to that of the grape vine.

The vinal (Prosopis ruscifolia) is a very small tree, yet boasts a sizeable crown. It is remarkable for its thorns which are from ten to fifteen centimeters long and sometimes a centimeter thick, and very dangerous if one gets a jab from them. The leaves, which are about the same size as acacia leaves but more pointed and somewhat rough, are said to be an effective remedy for eye ailments.

The scientific name for the chañar is Gurlioea decorticans; and of the mistol, Ziziphus mistol.

The fruit of all these trees are avidly devoured by all manner of beasts, and the algarrobo and vinal pods are the best possible fattening fodder for horses and cattle [191].

A type of fruit which is also to be found in a wild state, but in very limited quantity in my experience , is the plum. This fruit has a pleasant taste and is all the more appreciated for its scarcity.

During the aloja revels squabbles, fights and killings are frequent, and this not only among the Indians but among the Chaco whites also. 578

A couple of words now about the yuchan, also called palo borracho (drunken tree--Translator). It is a bombaceous tree whose scientific name is Chorisia insignis, and might well be called the cotton tree. It has a strange shape which justifies its vernacular name. The trunk is shaped like an oil jar, that is, narrow at its base, wide in the middle and narrow once more at the point where the crown forks. The trunk grows to a diameter of two meters and is covered with spiked bumps. At most it reaches a height of four or five meters and is often accompanied by a shoot growing at its base. The crown is at first made up of only two branches which later subdivide and form a wide crown of some eight, ten or more meters in diameter. The leaves are similar to those of the walnut but a little smaller and provide good shade. 137

From the bark, strips are cut which are used for tying bundles, as roofing material, to wrap and tie bunches of tobacco leaves and for any similar use. The Indians make their canoes from the trunk, all of a piece. In order to do this all they do is hollow it out with any old tool, since the wood is soft and easily worked when newly cut but later becomes harder than cork although spongy like it when dry. The Matacos use the name cuóu quiác for canoe, which in their tongue means "duck." 824 [283] [396]

But the thing which is especially interesting about the yuchan is its fruit, which in size and shape is like a lemon. When it is ripe, which usually occurs between November and January, according to its location, the lemons split into four lobes and there appears a plume-like puff of cotton, white as snow, which little by little is carried away by the wind. 137

One of these open lemons is about the size of a fist, and each tree produces hundreds of them each year.

The Indians make a limited use of this cotton, but the whites do not, although I have seen in Catamarca, where the number of these trees is small, white cloth made from this material which won prizes at the Córdoba exhibition.

In the Chaco there is an immense number of yuchans which grow mixed in with other hard-wood trees. If this cotton could be

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used industrially, the yuchan and the cháguar (which has fiber serviceable in making rope) [192] as they are to be found over an enormous territory and grow without need of cultivation, would be of great commercial value.

Another interesting tree that has domestic use and may some day be employed industrially is the pacara (Enterolobium timboiva). It is a tree of great beauty, very tall, of large girth and having a great deal of foliage -- it is of the mimosa family. Its fruit is a flat, oblong, twisted pod of a dark chestnut color about an inch and a half long and which contains 12 percent to 15 percent of saponin. This pod is used [388] to get the grease out of clothes and wool.

To finish as we had started, I must add that the Indians are great 273 lovers of the alcoholic beverages common among the whites, and become so drunk as to be floored. Even in this detail are they like those who are not their brothers in Christ.

Chapter VII

Wars

The Indians are much addicted to wars, it must be confessed, 721 and they are perpetually fighting; it is -- if I may be allowed the expression -- a continual giving and taking.

One war follows another, either because the vanquished wish to avenge their previous losses or because the victors have begun to enjoy their victories. Causes for war are: having fished, hunted or harvested in foreign territory, or the need to annul an offence or the hope of gain.

These wars are not strategic ones in which one battle follows another until the enemy is helpless to defend himself; rather are they surprise attacks on camps with the object of overwhelming and pillaging them and carrying off cattle, boys and sometimes even women.

This is why the camps or villages, in forested regions, always 361 have flanks and back right up against the deep woods, where, if surprised, the inhabitants may find refuge, and where it would be impossible to pursue them as there is a veritable labyrinth of paths known only to the inhabitants of the village.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Introduction.

The vast alluvial lowland commonly known under the name of *El Gran Chaco*, is situated in the heart of South America, being bounded in the east by the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, in the west by the eastern cordilleras of the Bolivian Andes, and in the north and south approximately by latitudes 20° and 30° South respectively. Politically this territory is divided between the republics Argentine, Paraguay, and Bolivia, but the boundaries between Paraguay and Bolivia have long been uncertain owing to the fact that the interior parts of the Chaco are still very little known and practically no-man's land. In fact, northern Chaco has up till now remained a white spot on the map of South America. The very name of Chaco has been much disputed, but this question may now be regarded as definitely settled. Chaco is a Spanish form of the Quichua name *chacu*, 'hunting', 'chase'. The word has reference to the great hunting expeditions which, as we know, were annually arranged by the Incas, and on which thousands of Indians were employed as drivers. The name *chacu* was later applied to the Indians who devoted themselves to this kind of chase, as well as to the tracts where these hunts took place.[1]) The Incas, of course, only knew a small part of the immense territory which is now called Chaco, more strictly speaking the forest-clad slopes of the eastern cordilleras as well as the adjacent plains, regions which formerly were and in parts still are extremely rich in all kinds of game. The interior regions, particularly east of Pilcomayo, inhabited by savage Indians, were unknown to the Incas and were not explored until our own days.

The climate in the Gran Chaco is on the whole subtropical, but subject to great variations, a fact that accounts for the different character of the vegetation in different parts of the country. In the west, where

[1]) See Enrique de Gandia, *Historia del Gran Chaco*. Madrid, 1930, pp. 7 sqq.

[p. 1]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable, we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourliea decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sisyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called »summer» in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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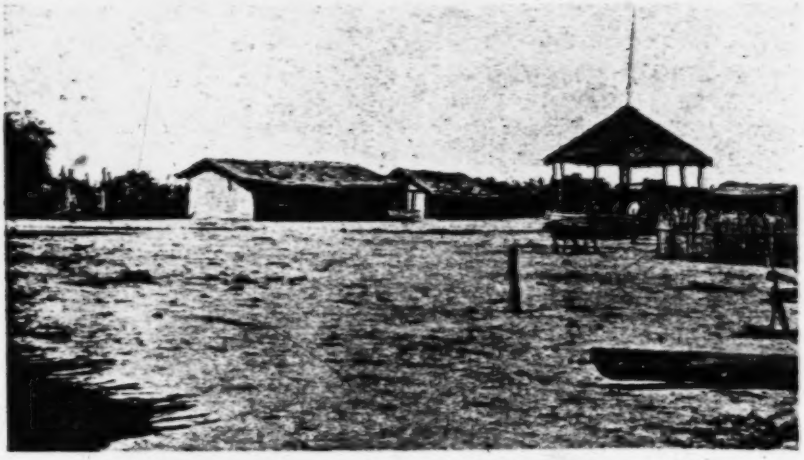
A landscape characteristic of the Chaco on the middle course af the Pilcomayo: grassy plains varying with patches of shrubby forest and palm groves.



A Bolivian fort on the middle course of the Pilcomayo.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK6

CHAPTER II.

General characteristics and material culture.

In their physical characteristics the *Choroti* and the *Mataco* show the same affinity as appears in their languages. Both of them are strongly built and of middle height, the Mataco somewhat taller than the Choroti. The average height of the former seems to be about 163 or 164 cm. for the men and 154 or 155 cm. for the women; of the latter about 162 or 163 cm. for the men and 152 or 153 cm. for the women. In their sturdy appearance the Mataco resemble the mountain Indians, and in former times there has probably been intermarriage between them and the Quichuas. The hair of both tribes is black, coarse and straggling and is worn long by both men and women, except when it is temporarily cut short for ceremonial reasons. The eyes are dark-brown, the nose somewhat flattened, and the features of the face generally irregular, especially among the Mataco. Both tribes know the custom of tattooing the face, the women being always tattooed, the men only in some cases, and never as completely as the women.

I need not dwell upon the physical characteristics of the *Tobas* since they have been described by nearly all authors ever since Lozano. They certainly form an easily recognisable type of Indian, differing considerably from the rest of the Chaco tribes, one salient feature being their remarkably tall and strong build of body. The Tobas are in fact among the tallest of all South American Indians, being in this respect comparable with the ancient Patagonians, to whom they were probably related, as well as with the present Ona Indians of the mainland of Tierra del Fuego. The physical anthropology of the Tobas, just as that of the Mataco and the Choroti, has been studied scientifically by the German anthropologist Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche.[1])

[1]) Lehmann-Nitsche, R. *Estudios antropológicos sobre los Chiriguanos, Chorotes, Matacos y Tobas* (*Anales del Museo de La Plata*. Buenos Aires, 1908).

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

C
721 belongings, they try to despoil it by surprise. These actions are always followed by deaths, wounds and imprisonment, which are cause enough for new wars, made without warning, to which end each has informers and spies in the other camp.

Fortune has for a long time favored the Tobas who occupy the best lands, that is, those bordering on the Paraná and Paraguay rivers for about sixty leagues inland and for hundreds of leagues along the rivers' courses; furthermore because of clandestine commerce with Corrientes and the Republic of Paraguay these Indians have been able to secure some firearms, and as they are the furthest away from the white man's ever closing ring, they naturally receive an appreciable contingent of rascals who are attempting to escape from them.

This is why the Vilelas and Chulupíes have become mixed in with the Tobas, which the Mocovíes, who used to live in the Southwest, in direct contact with the Santa Fe and Santiago frontiers, are also doing and who furthermore have so much in common with them as regards language -- for I have found among them many identical words. This very thing is what is happening to the Matacos.

Chapter II

Physical Characteristics of the Matacos

M
● 142 The physical differences between the Tobas and the Matacos are noteworthy. Generally speaking, the Mataco is half a hand's breadth shorter than the Toba, though this does not mean that he is a small man when compared to us. He has an extraordinarily deep chest, a bull-like neck and well developed muscles; he is thick set, his head large, his face broad and with very salient cheekbones.

They have long lower jaws, very much inclined downwards; their foreheads are hardly ever broad but often seem even smaller than they are in reality because of their unkempt hair. Their feet are medium sized, their hands small, well formed and admirably joined to the
M arm, especially in the women; the hair on their faces is scanty. Of
142 their thirty-two teeth, the canines have seemed to me, in general
262 very little pronounced, which may have its explanation in the fact

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some
[262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat
[263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of
[262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and
[756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black,
[165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of
302 [165] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

take pains to comb themselves, particularly the women. I remember an occasion when I wished very much to obtain a paddle, made of "palo-fierro" [iron-wood--Translator] and having two blades, the blades ending in long, narrow points. It belonged to an Indian friend of mine who had quite a beautiful wife. I offered him a comb in exchange for the double paddle, but after having considered the matter for a while he refused to make the exchange. His wife seemed to me to be very sorry that the deal had not come off, and she must have made use of all her wiles for on the following day her husband spontaneously came [176] and proposed that we make the exchange. It may be that the reader would have thought better of my being a little more generous, but let it be remembered that if I had given my comb away I would not then have been able to obtain the paddle, which was of more interest to me than the Adamic Indian couple.

What I have said of the Matacos can also be said of the Tobas, with this addition, that the Tobas are taller than the former Indians and generally show a larger expanse of forehead -- I do not know if they are actually broader -- owing to their habit of tying their hair up with a band. This information is true also of the Mocovíes and Chulupíes, all of whom inhabit the Argentine Gran Chaco, to the north of which, in the Bolivian Chaco, live the Chiriguanos and Cirionoses.

Among all these Indians the skin color varies between that of new copper and mud, there being also, here and there, some with blackish markings or blemishes.

Chapter III

Some Ethnic Characteristics

It is customary to say that these Indians are extremely dirty, but I have some very serious doubts in that regard, for I have seen them, in the summer time, run into the river for pleasure's sake at certain fixed hours of the day in great numbers, both men and women, each sex in its own determined place. This would appear to be a custom and not a mere whim. In addition to this they often go into the water to fish. It is true that they seem to be dirty, mostly because of their

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

On seeing this couple, almost in a state of stark nakedness, seated on a bench among the cylinders and pistons of the engine, motionless for hours, we were necessarily reminded of the earthly paradise.

When among strangers the women are quiet and impassive, but when left to themselves they are full of fun and as playful as children. And this is generally the Indians' character.

The women take up a somewhat strange posture with their hands when they are standing. As they have no pockets to put them in, or fan with which to occupy them, or what have you, they place them upon their breasts which serve as supports for their arms which together rest upon them.

It would seem that such a habit would enlarge the breasts, but this is not so. The breasts are broad, it is true, but short and erect while the women are young. After expertoe yirum, and having given suck to one or more children, the breasts shrivel and retract in a very unaesthetic manner, to tell the truth. It is to be noted that both men and women age early there, and also die early, and to this must be attributed the fact that there are few gray hairs even when there are faces and bodies so wrinkled as to make one believe that their owners must be as old as Methuselah.

I have gone into some detail in this matter of the breasts because it is known that in other regions, according to what is said, the women, when they give suck, give the nipple over the shoulder to the child which they are carrying on their backs. The fact is that no such thing occurs here.

The women, along with the men, have abundant, coarse, straight hair. They wear it rather long but not as long as they might, for it is shortened by wearing it in an unkempt fashion (which serves them as protection for eyes and forehead against the sun) and also by cutting.

They cut their hair, that on their faces as well as that on their scalps, with the jaw of a fish called palometa, which is armed with extraordinarily sharp teeth placed in two rows. The upper teeth dovetail exactly with the lower.

The palometa, the raya (ray--Translator) and the yacaré (alligator--Translator) are the scourge of those who bathe in this river and the lakes or pools which are fed by it. The palometa snaps, tears

It is worth noting that although they are such tipplers, they do 264
not drink anything with their meals, not even water. On board ship
the Indian guests we entertained refused all beverages while they were
eating. After they had finished eating they preferred to drink water
by crouching beside the river and drinking out of one hand.

The Indians are great beggars and yet miserly with their own [209]
possessions where whites are concerned. This is understandable since
they are poor.

It occurs to me that I should mention something which, though 142 ●
out of place here, I must set down for fear of forgetting it later: 145

The Indian boys, until they are eight or ten have disproportionately large bellies, so much so that they customarily bind them at the level of the navel. Later on they lose their bloated tummies and grow into well proportioned men.

It seems pertinent to me to say that the algarrobo belongs to 137
our family of the garrobas (Ceratonia silicua) and the botanists know
it under the name of Prosopis algarrobo. Its importance is immense
in the domestic economy of the savages and country people. It de-
serves close attention for this reason. The crown grows to some ten
meters in diameter but is not very dense, either because of the small
number of leaves or because of their shape, yet it affords quite a fair
amount of shade. The bark is very rough and is similar to that of the
grape vine.

The vinal (Prosopis ruscifolia) is a very small tree, yet boasts a sizeable crown. It is remarkable for its thorns which are from ten to fifteen centimeters long and sometimes a centimeter thick, and very dangerous if one gets a jab from them. The leaves, which are about the same size as acacia leaves but more pointed and somewhat rough, are said to be an effective remedy for eye ailments.

The scientific name for the chañar is Gurlioea decorticans; and of the mistol, Ziziphus mistol.

The fruit of all these trees are avidly devoured by all manner of beasts, and the algarrobo and vinal pods are the best possible fattening fodder for horses and cattle [191].

A type of fruit which is also to be found in a wild state, but in very limited quantity in my experience , is the plum. This fruit has a pleasant taste and is all the more appreciated for its scarcity.

dye themselves red when they are courting, black when they wish 302
to appear dreadful, and green when celebrating some festivity.
These colors come off very easily.

While on the subject of personal adornment, I must say that 304
these Indians, to a greater or lesser degree, are in the habit of 824
tattooing themselves. I have seen this carried to great lengths
among some Toba warriors, and especially among the women. It
looks something like the scars left by smallpox and is set out in
geometric designs. They do it by puncturing the skin with a [216]
large thorn coated with a caustic substance which looks like milk
and which leaves an indelible mark and remains under the
epidermis. This substance is to be found mainly in Bolivia in the
region of Santa Cruz, and is called in Guaraní iguoqui. The same
name is given to the plant from which it comes which is a vine
which produces bunches of white flowers and elongated fruit
which break open and expel a sort of dust. In order to obtain
iguoqui they cut the bunches before they ripen, and from the stalk
there exudes the milky sap used for tattooing. While the opera-
tion is in process they keep the portion of stalk submerged in water
so that its milky contents will not well out and be lost. A Chiri-
guano Indian saw one of these vines twenty leagues downstream
from the frontier with the whites on the Bermejo River in the
place called La Luna Nueva.

A custom very similar in nature to tattooing in its object 302
is the plucking of hair which is a universal activity among the
inhabitants of the Chaco and possibly among all the Indians of the
New World.

The object of this is to appear better looking, but it is
possible that the real cause has something to do with hygiene
and comfort.

Maybe they want to set themselves off in this way from the
other animals, which are covered with hair.

Meanwhile, either because they are naturally so or because
of a gradual natural selection based on their depilatory habit, [142]
the fact is that the Indians are almost completely lacking in hair
both on the body and face, and the little which does grow they
pull out, with very few exceptions.

In spite of their language's being so complete I have been 533
unable to discover canticles or any similar musical effort. All

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK6

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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A settlement of Mataco Indians. Mataco-Noctenes. Bolivia.

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A Mataco Indian dressed in a caraguata shirt.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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[152]

in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

[157]

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[173]
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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

113, 143

Chiriguano 8F10
Choroti 8K8
Mataco 8I7
Tehuelche 8H5
Caraja 8P9
Tucano 8Q19
Guarani 8M4
Timbira 8O8
Araucanians 8G4
Paez 8C15
Canari 8D4
Jivaro 8D9
Aymara 8F8
Ona 8H4
Yahgan 8H6

/For information on genic locations based on Streng's diagram of co-ordinates of the blood groups of the natives of South America, see: 4: Hill et al., 8818 Warao, Category 116, pp. 107-114./

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which even in the most favorable physical circumstances can 732
occur quite often among children who are the offspring of parents who are too closely consanguineous. Marriages of this type (between close relatives) are not rare here, and -- this is not just an extra trip bearing grist for my mill -- I have been assured that of the very small number of defective persons these latter, the deaf-mute, are the least rare among the Indians of these parts; among whom, let it be said, I have not seen a single cretin or cotudo [coto is a malignant swelling of the throat -- Translator] and that in spite of the fact that aberrants of this type abound in the north and western part of the Republic.

To come back to my deaf-mute: The occasion of my meeting him was brought about by his having been attacked by a tiger [jaguar--Translator] which mauled him horribly while he was gathering firewood. (This is one further proof as to the difficulty of putting up a successful struggle for life in these waste places if one is not in the full possession of all one's senses). We were called to treat the poor wretch, but he refused our ministrations energetically, preferring to put himself in the hands of the witch doctors.

Despite what I have stated above, the Indians themselves [847]
have assured me that it sometimes [222] happens that a mother will allow her children to die if their father or any other man who will care for them dies or goes away.

However, this must happen only very seldom (and does 261
not weaken our argument regarding the handicapped) for among the inhabitants of a given village and particularly between relatives there exists a truly charming sharing of goods -- yet when food is scarce one may suppose that the phenomenon is more common. But such a state of food scarcity is probably felt less owing to the great variety of foods acceptable to the Indians and their really remarkable adaptability to the availability of food: they can live on a very skimpy diet when need arises, and then gorge themselves with a vengeance when they hit a time of plenty.

The elasticity of the stomachs of these savages is truly 261
extraordinary. When not on the march a mouthful of food is 147
enough for them; while fresh air, the exertions of the hunt, of fishing, of harvesting and of traveling in pursuit of these activities

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or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

P2
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They have general terms which represent certain abstractions such as "bird," "fish," "tree," and also particular ones with which they differentiate between particular species. What is more they even have abstract nouns, for in addition to such words as "never," "always," they have others, "fear" for instance, which they call uái, a word which also means "tremor" or "trembling." For earthquake they say hunat uái, which means "earth tremble," just as in Spanish one says "tremor of the earth." Can it be therefore that for the Matacos to fear is to tremble? Is it not in this way, taking the part for the whole, that our own abstract terms came into being in the great majority of cases? Now trembling is one, the commonest, of the many outward manifestations of fear.

I affirm that these Indians are in full possession of the human 151 ●
intellectual faculties and ability to judge rationally, and these developed to such a degree that they can be considered our equals both in their way of reasoning and in their antiquity. The gap which exists between them and us is one which exists only in the actual world of facts and of the ideas which refer to [245] those facts -- a gap which is in no way proportional to that which exists between their intellectual faculties and ours. And this is easily understood. 000

How many years have gone by, how many were and how many are the individuals amongst us who have taken full advantage of the intellectual benefits of science, ethics and higher education generally? Very small in number are they if we take into account the historical antiquity of man and the number of men who have lived. The effects, therefore, of human psysiological traits must have changed the common heritage of humanity in the whole world during the period of its limited civilizations very little, if at all.

The fact of not having reflected on this phenomenon is the cause behind the ignorant persons's astonishment at being confronted with the advanced conditions and relative progress to be found amongst savage peoples.

The short intellectual and moral distance which separates them from us is an eloquent testimony to the hoary antiquity of man, dating back to the separation of man from his pre-human ancestors, which dwarfs into insignificance the few years which separate us from a state of savagery akin to that in which these Indians live.

this shared work has its cause in that the last two mentioned products must necessarily be gathered within a certain limited period and therefore the Indians have need of the combined effort of all the workers they can muster in order to harvest all they possibly can. 222 462

For the making of nets they must first, naturally, begin by making twine, which they call niñ'hiδi. They get their textile material from a bromelia which in Quechua is called chaguar (a name now also used by the white settlers) and in Mataco hδié. They steep the leaves of this plant in water for a time and then comb them with a clam shell. Once this has been done the residue is put out into the sun to dry and whiten. The last stage is that of twisting the fiber -- a wad of it is held in the left hand and rubbed back and forth [182] on a leg, upon which they sprinkle a little gypsum in order to avoid getting hurt. This gypsum powder is called maccotac-muc. 283

The twine being thus ready they make not only nets with it but also ropes, which they call niñ'hioi-less, which means family or skein of threads.

Some of the Indians have special skill in making weapons, and make them as a means of barter with their companions. They use a very hard wood for the bow, and ostrich [rhea--Translator] tendons or strips of hide for the string. The arrow shaft is made of cane, the head of some hard wood, often tipped with bone and barbed like a fish hook. 411

Chapter V

Marriage Customs

Those who do not know anything about the Indians may believe that they lead morally and materially sterile lives. Yet this is not actually the case: the savage loves, hates and knows what ambition, enjoyments, dangers and glory are. He is acquainted with religion and with fear. In these primitive societies the whole gamut of human affections is experienced precisely "as among the whites," as Faustino used to say to me when I asked him about the intimate experiences of the Indian way of life. 152

The opposite could well be demonstrated but in order not to stray from these my Indians, let me say that I have seen proof positive of conjugal love among polygamists.

We had on board an Indian with his young and beautiful partner, whom he loved and adored as though she were a representation of the Virgin.

In that business of the Indian who was bitten by a snake and whom we treated, his wife came to him immediately and cared for him for twenty days without ever leaving his side.

Chief Pascual, whose wife was captured and carried off in a surprise raid -- she being old and ugly --, organized an invasion, tracked down the attackers, fought like a lion and rescued his partner from the hands of the enemy. These are facts which happened in a short time while I was present in that area.

When an Indian puts in an appearance and asks for something, he never forgets his children, his wife or his relatives: when he receives anything capable of being divided up, he distributes it, not only to the above but also to his companions.

I have also noticed that mothers are always extraordinarily loving with their children; and have noted that the inter-tribal wars and the mass killings of the inhabitants of a given village are always motivated by the need to avenge offences offered against compatriots or relatives. And if this does not reflect loving concern, what does?

[218] They are cruel, but only regarding prisoners of war whom they condemn to death. We are hardly in a condition to judge them for this cruelty since we did ourselves do the very same until recently; put it into wholesale practice against the Indians themselves during the period of conquest, and continue to do so against them even now when we can do it with impunity.

Among the Indians this custom of killing prisoners is necessary for their personal security in the nomadic life they lead in which they are continually exposed to surprise attacks, and it furthermore frees them from the shame of slavery, an unknown phenomenon amongst them. (1) Looked at from another point

1. This does not agree with what is recounted about the Mbayas and other tribes, who, as report has it, have slaves. (Ed.)

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

relatives of the departed cannot live safely in it. This is the reason why in the Gran Chaco a traveller so often encounters remains of Indian villages which have evidently been burnt and abandoned by their inhabitants. The radical destruction of the whole village is always resorted to when several deaths have taken place at short intervals. The relatives of the deceased, when they abandon their own village, generally go and live with their relatives and friends in a neighbouring village, where they stay for some time, or until they decide to found a new settlement in some other part of the country. Custom requires that when the mourners arrive at the other village, they shall be received with wailing.

The Tobas, although they always burn the house where a death has taken place, do not as a rule deem it necessary to destroy the whole village. Similarly the relatives of the deceased generally remain there, building themselves a new dwelling; in other cases they leave the place for some time. The other inhabitants of the village, on the other hand, make no notable change in their mode of life, since they are not to the same extent exposed to danger from the death-spirit as the nearest relations.

Weeping and wailing plays an important part among the mourning ceremonies of the Indians, although it is always limited to the women and the children. The fact that wailing is ceremonial clearly appears from the circumstances under which it takes place. Although it is beyond doubt that the Indians are capable of real feelings of sorrow at the death of a near relation, yet their intense fear of death — including the fear of the dead body — is apparent throughout their mourning customs. The object of the wailing seems to be partly to propitiate the spirit of the departed relative by showing him how deeply the survivors grieve at his death, partly to frighten away the death-demon by the noise. The latter point of view is probably the most important. Wailing is continued for several months after the death. The length of the wailing period varies according to the social importance of the deceased. A great chief is mourned in all tribes for longer than an ordinary member of the community, in some cases up to a whole year. As to the manner of wailing there is a marked distinction between the Tobas and the Mataco on the one hand, and the Choroti on the other. The wailing of the Toba women is like a greatly exaggerated loud crying and sobbing which is seemingly the expression of a desperate sorrow. The wailing of the Choroti women is calmer and more like the weeping of a child. Every lamentation consists of a series of sounds produced in a high falsetto voice and

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

family will then be sent to the killer's village to ask whether the murdered woman's husband was at home the night before. If the answer is negative the murderer is known, and the families of the two victims will take up their arms and prepare to attack the killer's village. However, this was often merely a move undertaken to ensure the payment of blood money, compensation for the two lives, by the murderer's family.

Another example of the fatal results of a woman's infidelity is bound up in a custom that clearly shows the cruelty that formerly prevailed among the Mataco. If a man discovered that his wife had a lover, he could pretend ignorance and privately watch their habits and meeting place. One day he would follow his wife and wait in hiding until he could surprise the pair asleep. First he would kill his rival with an arrow, and then overpower the wife and cut her throat. He then dragged her out on to the path with legs far apart, slit up her stomach and lay her lover on top. The husband then crept back to his hut, seating himself at the fire with his bow and arrow in his hand waiting to see what would happen. Someone would soon come by the scene of the crime and come running back to the village, whereupon the man fled into the forest. As he could not be found a start was made with burying the two victims. In the meantime the murderer had crept close in and could hear what the wife's family said about him. At the moment they lowered the wife's corpse into the grave, and all eyes were looking down, the man shot one more arrow, killing the brother of the murdered woman. He then fled at great speed, reached his village and informed his family of the slaughter of the three persons. Both his father's and his mother's bands then armed themselves, and shortly afterwards the bands connected with the wife and the rival arrived to attack the village. This case is not merely a story, but a typical instance showing how adultery with the Mataco frequently leads to homicide and blood feuds between different bands.

Unfaithfulness is one of the chief reasons for divorce, which is a quite frequent occurrence with the Mataco. If on account of infidelity a man is divorced from his wife, he himself leaves the house taking with him only his personal effects such as fishing net, tinder, bow and arrow etc. He moves first to his parents' house, and later to the family of his new wife. Under these circumstances he cannot take his children with him unless they are so big that they themselves desire it. If the woman's unfaithfulness is the cause of the divorce, she will be evicted from the house, and not until later will her family come and fetch her personal property such as clay vessels, *yicas*, harvest of forest fruit, plus any goats and sheep. The children then stay with the father and can be brought up by his mother or some other female relative. It is always a general rule that at divorces the injured party retains house and children, and only the personal property is divided. However, it is not always that things go according to rule. Often, for example, an injured woman and her mother will visit her divorced husband's new house when he is away, remove his personal things and perhaps burn down the house.

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Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [55] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned with what was going on. After an interruption, during which [273] everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [152] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

/319 cont./

433 222 241 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 578 682 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar, and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 513 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things. They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 515 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 585 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 152 837 593 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless, the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 301 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

On seeing this couple, almost in a state of stark nakedness, seated on a bench among the cylinders and pistons of the engine, motionless for hours, we were necessarily reminded of the earthly paradise.

When among strangers the women are quiet and impassive, but when left to themselves they are full of fun and as playful as children. And this is generally the Indians' character.

The women take up a somewhat strange posture with their hands when they are standing. As they have no pockets to put them in, or fan with which to occupy them, or what have you, they place them upon their breasts which serve as supports for their arms which together rest upon them.

It would seem that such a habit would enlarge the breasts, but this is not so. The breasts are broad, it is true, but short and erect while the women are young. After expertoe yirum, and having given suck to one or more children, the breasts shrivel and retract in a very unaesthetic manner, to tell the truth. It is to be noted that both men and women age early there, and also die early, and to this must be attributed the fact that there are few gray hairs even when there are faces and bodies so wrinkled as to make one believe that their owners must be as old as Methuselah.

I have gone into some detail in this matter of the breasts because it is known that in other regions, according to what is said, the women, when they give suck, give the nipple over the shoulder to the child which they are carrying on their backs. The fact is that no such thing occurs here.

The women, along with the men, have abundant, coarse, straight hair. They wear it rather long but not as long as they might, for it is shortened by wearing it in an unkempt fashion (which serves them as protection for eyes and forehead against the sun) and also by cutting.

They cut their hair, that on their faces as well as that on their scalps, with the jaw of a fish called palometa, which is armed with extraordinarily sharp teeth placed in two rows. The upper teeth dovetail exactly with the lower.

The palometa, the raya (ray--Translator) and the yacaré (alligator--Translator) are the scourge of those who bathe in this river and the lakes or pools which are fed by it. The palometa snaps, tears

855 and carry on, his mother essayed to see whether dragging him off to some distance from the hut would help, but he struggled and rolled on the ground. Finally she controlled him and, without any short temperedness, and laughing all the time she set him down a few yards from the house where the child continued to cry but did not dare to return.

857 861 This same gentleness and absence of brutality can be observed among playing children. Thus, on numerous occasions I have been able to observe little children vying for possession of a small ball; they would push and charge into each other, but never maliciously or violently. Mataco education stresses sweetness and gentleness and a [157] violent man or one of evil character (witsax) [? Translator] inspires them with fear and disgust. From the tenderest age children learn to share their food. When I used to distribute candy the children would never fail to let the absent ones know so that they might have a part of what was being given.

Abortion and Infanticide

847 Abortion and infanticide used to be practiced by the Matacos on a large scale, as also among the other Chaco tribes. According to my informants, a woman has an abortion when she is pregnant and not married; when she has been abandoned by her husband or, after a quarrel with him, for vengeance. Many women undergo abortions when they are [12] pregnant for the first time, in the hope that such action will make future deliveries easier.

It is very generally held that the Chaco Indian women use powerful drugs to cause abortion, but this is doubtless merely legendary. The aids of which they make use are purely mechanical. During the fifth month after conception they get a friend to pound them on their abdomen until the blood begins to flow.

Marriage

832 In amorous relations the young girls appear to take more of the initiative than do the men. They easily become provocative and make

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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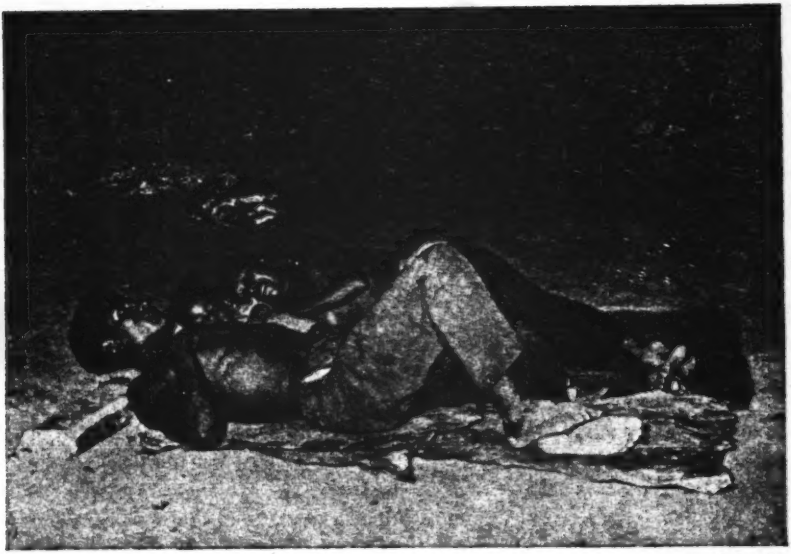

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

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3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

disease. The sounds of the whistles followed each other at closer intervals and the rattles were shaken with still more energy and persistance. The ceremony was finished when all the members of the community were relieved of the bad influence which had entered them. The expelled disease was the aphtous fever from which the cattle were suffering at that time and which seriously affected the health of many individuals, who had eaten contaminated meat and become ill.

The medicine-men had changed their spirits into *istins* (sort of ravens) to call on the disease. As the disease was particularly severe at this time the first attempt at conciliation did not meet with much success. The men had to change into *masa* (earth bees). When the disease is being expelled, it is chased into the ground.

XIV. Treatment of People Possessed by Ho?nat-Lele

Upon visiting a Matako settlement (near Las Lomitas, Formosa) one night I had the opportunity to be present at the curing of two cases of demoniac possession. In the first case the patient was a girl of 13 or 14 and in the other a child. The girl had gone to the bush and had been caught by a *nǫoLe* or a *ho?nat-Lele* who lives in thickets under the earth. It was not a *welán* who entered the body of the girl as the *welán* live in the *yuchan* only and the girl had not walked near one of these trees. The *ho?nat-Lele* made its presence known through the girl's hysterical fits. She cried and sobbed as though she were in pain. The Indians told me something was hurting her, although she did not suffer from any disease. They laid particular stress upon this fact. When I arrived the girl was surrounded by an old man who acted as medicine-man, her father, two aunts and another man, whose relationship with the patient I was unable to determine. Each had put on a red poncho with white stripes. The possessed girl and all those with her were standing, with the exception of the medicine-man, who was squatting near the patient's legs.

726 which was dry at the time. Then, moving along the left bank, they came upon the people of San Martín from the rear, cutting off their retreat. A large number of the latter, mostly women and children
[127] were killed or wounded. The Yuto people carried off a child with them as a prisoner.

Divers Religious Beliefs

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158 Among the spirits the most to be feared are the wilan who possess their victims and sink them into a state of furious madness. Thus, in the San Patricio mission a young girl all at once became pale, her eyes starting from their sockets. She fled, bolting into the wooded area, where she remained for four days. Those who followed her said that her tracks disappeared as suddenly as if the girl had flown through the air.

Another girl got up from a fainting spell during which she had been under the care of four witch doctors and said that a spirit had entered her.

Here is a case which took place in San Andrés a short time before my arrival. A Mataco had gone off to some distance from the village in search of a horse. On the way back he imagined that he saw against [15] a tree, a small luminous being, about the size of a cooking pot, which leaped from tree to tree and finally disappeared in the underbrush. Frightened, our Indian fled to the village where he fell in a faint and was shaken by violent convulsions. Doctor C. Smith had to give him a morphine injection to quiet him. The Indian got better and a few days later felt well enough to go out into the surrounding area. On the way back he had the same experience and suffered like aberrations. His parents, shaking with fright, went to get the doctor so that he might give him an injection. According to Dr. C. Smith, such hallucinations may be the result of kidney trouble, which causes the diseased person to have optical illusions, especially the apparition of luminous spots before the eyes. Certain strange and sinister sounds, also, which the Mataco Indians attribute to spirits
[821] are really made by nocturnal birds. And a meteor, which fell into the Pilcomayo during my stay there was explained to me by the Matacos as the fall of an old man with gray hair.

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family suspected that she had taken the fruit although she showed none of the usual symptoms. One of her sons asked the missionary for help. As soon as she realized she had been discovered, she jumped up and vehemently denied having taken poison. The son insisted that she had and that she was trying to deceive her family and the missionary. To make sure that she was in no danger, the missionary decided to give her an emetic. The old woman struggled violently, throwing off everyone who approached her; only after an hour's strenuous fight was she overcome and forced to take the purge. Of course her stomach contained large quantities of the poison, which she had timed very carefully to take effect early in the morning when everyone would be deep in sleep and, therefore, unaware of her condition. Had it not been for her son's persistence, she undoubtedly would have been found dead the next day. Her husband, who was devoted to her, appeared to be quite unconcerned and, had the matter been left with him, would have done nothing to save her.

In general, love affairs are said to be the main cause of these suicides. They are particularly frequent on the occasions of the nightly dances which are closely connected with the sexual life of the Matako and at such times may take epidemic proportions. A young man will take poison for some reason and soon after others follow suit. Asked why they try to kill themselves, they explain that they feel compelled to do so by some superior force. The fruit attracts them; the desire to eat it becomes an obsession. When they walk in the bush their attention becomes riveted upon the fruit, which they see everywhere, until the temptation becomes too strong and they eat it.

Young boys at school are quite likely to take poison when they have been scolded by their teacher. For this reason the missionaries must exercise particular care to avoid offense when the poisonous fruit is ripe and, consequently, especially dangerous.

Actually there is a great deal of ostentation in these suicides. It is likely that many who take poison, do not take a fatal dose. Those who really wish to die generally take the poison secretly and try to conceal the fact until it is too late to help them. The others, on the contrary, boast about what they have done and are willing, even eager to get medical treatment.

This mania also has its simulators and fakers. Certain individuals imitate all the clinical symptoms, —convulsions, foaming, etc.— without having tasted the deadly fruit. Here again the desire to show off, to be the center of attention is foremost. Every suicide attempt provokes turmoil in the village and everyone flocks to the house where

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and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizzines increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

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naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered. According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

Third case. A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was discovered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

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forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

availed to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary

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159 762 together with his people but, after some difficulties with his young wife, took poison and died.

Ninth case. Martin, a 15 year old boy, was the kitchen boy of the mission and had always been a cheerful and willing worker. One day he told the missionary that he was married. From that time on, he looked troubled and became restless. Later the missionary was told that Martin did not like the girl with whom he lived but that the girl, who had a forceful character, would not permit him to leave her. Finally, depressed and broken, Martin told the missionary about his unhappy situation. He was advised to separate from his wife and determined to do so. Despite this resolution, he remained with her; to excuse himself he explained that every time he wanted to tell her to go away, "he would become weak all over and could say nothing". His own words were, "Then I go all weak and sleep with her".

The quarreling continued and things went from bad to worse. About this time Martin and his brother killed a cow that belonged to a white settler. The missionary, of course, learned about the theft. Knowing that the missionary would be angry, Martin left the kitchen and refused to return. In a state of utter dejection, he took poison but was saved by the missionary.

Two or three days later, during a quarrel over some meat, his elder brother struck him in the face. Angry and humiliated by the blow, the boy went to the forest and secretly ate sachasandia. In the evening he returned to the missionary who only noticed that one of his eyes was swollen and badly bruised. He was more depressed than ever and sighed on and on. Finally he took the missionary's hand, said goodby and, with another sigh, went home. When the missionary was called to his bedside, it was too late. He died the same night.

Martin had re-married a few days before his death. His new wife was a nice girl of about 14 years. She discovered his condition early in the night and tried to persuade his father to fetch the missionary. The old man slept on and paid no attention. When it was already too late, the boy's mother asked for help, but the father remained indifferent throughout. The moment the boy was dead, his mother squatted down, laid his head on her knees and started the death wailing, "My [764] son, my son, my son...". The other women joined in the lament. The next day the father beat his drum without stopping.

Tenth case. This attempt at suicide was made by an old woman of some 50 years, who had grown children and grandchildren. One of her sons was Martin, whose death was described above.

One afternoon, when she had mourned for her son for many days, she took poison. Evidently she was very tired and depressed. Her

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family suspected that she had taken the fruit although she showed none of the usual symptoms. One of her sons asked the missionary for help. As soon as she realized she had been discovered, she jumped up and vehemently denied having taken poison. The son insisted that she had and that she was trying to deceive her family and the missionary. To make sure that she was in no danger, the missionary decided to give her an emetic. The old woman struggled violently, throwing off everyone who approached her; only after an hour's strenuous fight was she overcome and forced to take the purge. Of course her stomach contained large quantities of the poison, which she had timed very carefully to take effect early in the morning when everyone would be deep in sleep and, therefore, unaware of her condition. Had it not been for her son's persistence, she undoubtedly would have been found dead the next day. Her husband, who was devoted to her, appeared to be quite unconcerned and, had the matter been left with him, would have done nothing to save her.

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114 It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, 101 131 Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

[161] "The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some 184 of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among 648 whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

[142] The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a 181 dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

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In a Chonti family three or four 163 •
children, arriving at intervals of two or three years, seemed to me to be the rule. Among the Tobas and the Mataco the children were somewhat more numerous, especially in families where the man had two or more wives. Whether the matter is or is not arranged by abortion, I cannot say.

Abortion is practised by unmarried women who become pregnant 847
in consequence of their sexual licentiousness. I have never seen unmarried women with children in any tribe. Married women also have recourse to feticide or infanticide when they have been abandoned by their husbands. Similarly, as I have stated before, a Toba man may kill the newborn child of his married daughter if his son-in-law has incurred his dislike.

Abortions are effected by the Chaco women by mechanical treatment. The woman kills the foetus by beating her abdomen and after that presses it out with her thumbs. She may perform the operation herself or be aided by some old woman. This is done fairly early, generally in the third or fourth month of pregnancy. The operation is said to cause the woman some pain, but does not seriously affect her health. Poisonous drugs or other abortive means are not used by the Chaco Indians.

If the Indians find nothing immoral in infanticide, this of course is still less the case with abortion. It is wholly a private affair of the woman or of her family, with which the community as such does not interfere. A feticide certainly does not cause her more remorse than the extraction of a tooth. Custom is very strict on this point, not only among the Chaco tribes but among all South American Indians.

CM 175 462 [844] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the CM Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, [595] and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances towards a Spanish woman. . . .

CM 175 [164] "Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the CM old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they [764] usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the CM shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while [771] memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain CM respect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may 175 do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. 756 These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

CM This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has 114 been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

164 "A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts 763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in 764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

768 "On returning from the funeral all the equipment which belonged to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he [764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

765 "The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
●164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, 771
Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians 123
regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard 771
and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs. 776

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a'hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a'hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or [753]
are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a'hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a'hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among 164 ●
them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down 775
into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

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must then be on the alert and have his horses and mules well secured. The settlers generally hunt the jaguar by means of hounds, of which of course a great number must be used. Badly attacked by its assailants, the beast at last seeks refuge in climbing a tree, where it is generally easily shot.

The natives stand in great fear of the jaguar, looking upon it as the incarnation of an evil spirit, and the beast does in fact seem to have far less respect for the Indian than for a white man. In the religion and mythology of the Chaco Indians the jaguar plays an important part.

The puma is rare, and the same may be said of the maned wolf (*Canis jubatus*) which is reported to exist in the Chaco, for I never saw or heard of any. The fox is very common on the plains, and its howling or barking is one of the characteristic sounds interrupting the silence of night. Of birds there is no great variety in the Chaco. Doves, wild turkeys, and small parrots are, in addition to ostriches, the birds most commonly seen in the pampas regions and forests. Only at the big lagoons, found here and there in the interior of the country, may one notice a rich bird-life, especially during the dry season. Ducks of different kinds, white and yellow herons, storks, and other aquatic birds in countless numbers give life to these places, whither also many animals of the forest descend to allay their thirst.

Venomous snakes, even rattlesnakes, are quite common on the plains, especially during the dry season. Both in the river Pilcomayo and in the lagoons alligators are found, although in the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco they are not as numerous as in the Rio Paraguay. The rivers moreover abound in fish, and all the Pilcomayo tribes live mainly by fishing.

Insect-life is very rich in summer-time. Different kinds of mosquitoes, crickets, large beetles, and especially the *Cicada* with its shrill whistling, shortly before sunset and at night fill the air with their weird sounds, innumerable croaking frogs joining in the concert. These manifestations of lower animal life, as they are perceived at sunset, are, I believe, the things that most impress a traveller in the Chaco.

Although mosquitoes are numerous and troublesome in the summer, the climate is on the whole healthy. Malarial fever does not occur, except when it is occasionally introduced by settlers or other white men. Rheumatism and catarrhs are the ailments from which the natives most commonly suffer.

The scarcity of water has been the greatest obstacle to the exploration of the Chaco. In the Bolivian Chaco the traveller preferably keeps to

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753 way the Indian has arrived at the theory of »possession«: an evil spirit has entered the body in the form of a material object of some kind. It is the medicine-man's business to extract the evil intruder, and if he succeeds in doing so, the patient will recover. An epidemic, on the other hand, especially such as has come to the Indians from another part of the country, is believed to be directly caused by special disease- and death-demons of a particularly malignant character, who wander about in the village carrying off one victim after the other. Against these demons even the art of the medicine-man is powerless. The only thing the panic-stricken Indians can do in such cases is to abandon the haunted village as soon as possible and wander off to another part of the country.

There is, to these Indians, practically no such thing as »natural« disease and death. Every illness is attributed to supernatural causes, be the diagnosis in a particular case witchcraft or disease.

Therefore, in dealing with native methods of curing illness we are here only concerned with such evils as are set down to witchcraft.

● 164 There are certain ailments which are particularly characteristic of
753 the Chaco Indians. Rheumatic pains, especially during the dry season, are very common. and both young and old people suffer from them. As we know. they usually come on very suddenly, and even civilized peoples still use expressions like »fairy-dart«, »*Hexenschuss*«, etc. of such sudden ailments. Beliefs of this kind are held both by the *Choroti*
753 and by the other Chaco Indians. The Indians have very concrete ideas as to the way in which the sorcerers and the demons who serve them operate. The mysterious pain suddenly afflicting a man is explained as due to an arrow shot by an evil spirit. The Choroti accordingly call this disease-demon *mōhsek ihītek*, i.e. »the arrow-shooting demon«, and this is an idea which is quite common among the South American Indians in general. The expression seems to indicate that at least in some cases an evil spirit is supposed to operate alone. As a rule, however, he is sent by a human sorcerer. I have already mentioned that the »arrow« or »splinter«, discharged by the sorcerer or his assistant demon, is generally a small stone, a cactus thorn, a piece of bone, or a small insect (for instance a worm or a beetle). I have also stated that this seemingly insignificant material object is identical with a mysterious demoniacal being whom the medicine-man, in curing the patient, tries to »extract« from his body. The object is sent by a *mōhsek*, or in a certain sense *is* a *mōhsek*. Generally, however, the Choroti call the mysterious intruder

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estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

767 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the [197] English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins [115] Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the [824] fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of 262 suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in 251 the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and 252 before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, 762 foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes 164 jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

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and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizziness increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

/212 cont./

755 756 783 796 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164] [231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

/216 cont./

755 536 they approached the sick woman and passed the poncho over her head; next they ran to the exit and shook it. They repeated this maneuver several times, then completely enveloped the woman in the poncho, and a medicine man began to rub her through the cloth. Everyone was singing but some were not dancing. After some time the poncho was taken off, carried at a running pace to the exit, and thrown outside. The dance was resumed; an assistant threw some water on the ground, and the chief medicine man then stopped the dance again. He sat next to the sick woman, covering himself completely with a large black blanket, and began to speak with the illness; during this time the man who was watering the ground carried up a bucket of water and, with the help of a medicine man, washed the face, head, and body of the sick woman, who was turned with her feet toward the passage made in the crossbars, and a path was traced with water from her feet to the passage. The chief medicine man got up and the dance was resumed with renewed ardor. During this dance the assistant moistened the shoulders [302] of the male dancers, while an old man painted the faces of the women red, giving them two circles on the cheek bones and a streak along the nose. At the same time one medicine man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a red cloth. At the end of a certain time the sick woman lay down, the dance continued, taking on a threatening character, and then suddenly the people appeared satisfied, having undoubtedly obtained a momentary success. The ceremony stopped and was resumed after an hour.

Note

[164] [132] According to the medicine men with whom I had a chance to talk about these two sick women, they were suffering from "sickness in the chest," /217/ easily explicable by a sharp atmospheric drop of almost 25° in 24 hours.

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some
[262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat
[263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of
[262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and
[756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black,
[165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of
302 [765] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./

771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
● 167 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
177 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci
131 The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
197 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
177 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Choroti SR6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

that invasion took place which we had seen in preparation in the village of Chaguaral. Unfortunately moths got into it and ruined it, and I had no other recourse but to throw it out since it was no longer worth sending to Italy together with some skulls and other objects I had collected. 727

This custom of scalp taking is common to all the Indians hereabouts, and is also indulged in by those living in North America. The strange thing is that it was also practiced by the Scythians.

The Germans also were in the habit of drinking from the skulls of their fallen enemies. Who does not know about Albuin the Longobard who made his wife Rosamund drink from her father's skull some 1300 years ago? [71]

This Indian practice reminds me of something which, in my opinion, reflects the sagacity of these savages:

I was with the colonel of the regiment which was on duty on the frontier, on one of his periodic visits. Near a fort where an Indian tribe was camped the son of the general chief came to see him, (the chief himself did not make an appearance since he wished the colonel to call on him first) and made us a present of some very good and delicious aloja. As it happened that he had just returned from a raid upon the Tobas we asked him if he had not brought back a few scalps. The Indian, as though seeking an excuse for his cruelty said: "The Tobas take the scalps of white men and we take the scalps of the Tobas."

On this same occasion, seeing me dressed in the manner of country people, surrounded by army officers and standing beside the colonel who treated me with great consideration and respect, the Indians whispered among themselves: "Who do you suppose this one is?" And the more sophisticated answered "he must be some president or other!"

It seemed to me as I heard this idle chatter and banter that I was in the midst of a thickly crowded mass of our own lower classes.

[196] One of the superstitions among these Indians is to sally forth on their raiding expeditions with the new moon. They appear to attribute some magical virtue to it, yet they do not 721 821

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; gúu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something. for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lutek; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-ʾhi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets M [415] which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's M [531] opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M 396 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 323 ● 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

261
or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

Chapter VII

Gender, Number, case, syncopation. Article?

a. Gender

It does not seem to me that the nouns have gender -- only in pronouns and in demonstrative adjectives are there to be found certain changes which make me suspect a gender differentiation. Yet this goes no further than the merest suspicion.

Withal, they do suffix the ending tziná to the names of female animals, which means "female," and, when used alone and not attached to another word, means "woman"; for example, "mare" is yélaiáj-tziná. In order to indicate a male animal they usually add asnáj, which actually means "male."

b. Number

I was so sure that these inhabitants of the Chaco must possess a plural formed by the joining or placing in close proximity of some word indicative of the concept of plurality, such as "much" or some other like word, that I was for ever in search of it. Actually there was nothing unnatural about such an idea -- the Guaraní Indians do in fact use such a linguistic device, heta, which placed beside a singular immediately imparts plurality to it; the Quichuas also do likewise by suffixing cuna, and these two nations of Indians are or were neighbors of the Matacos. Many other peoples use the self same artifice which is called agglutination; the Akka of Africa do so too.

It seemed therefore quite natural that the smaller should follow in the footsteps of the larger. Furthermore, is it not often stated that agglutination is common to the less advanced languages?

[249] It is a fact that in this case also it would seem as if the peoples who utilize this recourse are the least advanced -- actually this is very far from the truth.

In short, every language system has its weak points, which nevertheless do not detract from their basic usefulness among those who utilize it. It was therefore proper for me to accept this

While on this subject of postpositions, let the reader not marvel on seeing that in Mataco the order is completely different from our own. On the contrary, the shoe is on the other foot for it would be more to the point if he marvelled at our usage, for this business of suffixing the particles which we prefix must be considered as having been the universal norm at one time.

So it is that in German and in English, but especially in the former [271] the transposition of prepositions is quite frequent and is one of the elements which most contribute to language elegance -- not to speak of difficulty for those who wish to learn it starting from one of the so-called Latin group. At least the main difficulty lies there in my opinion, without mentioning the dissimilarity of the words themselves.

In Latin we have examples of prepositional transposition in the following: nobiscum, vobiscum, tecum, mecum and in the interchangeable position of such words as "versus, it being possible to say "I am going 'Romam versus' and 'versus Romam'." And this sort of usage carries over even to conjunctions so that one may say Senatus atque Populus Romanus or Senatus Populusque Romanus which has remained as Rome's famous motto. In Italian we have meco and feco to which the Spanish pleonasm con-migo and con-tigo correspond.

The examples which I have just cited can, in my opinion, be considered as vestiges of preexistant forms.

In South America's Indian languages, postpositions rather than prepositions are the order of the day, and the contrary is only an exception, at least in Quichua and Guarani, which have only postpositions, and in Araucano which makes use of both forms. The above mentioned Indians, together with the Matacos and savage Chaco and Central tribes, occupy all of South America.

May it not be that this form is more useful than ours in contributing to a quick perception of ideas, the main term being expressed first while the changeable particle is attached later? Of course, one of these small particles does not retard appreciation of the relation between the two terms very much, but nevertheless, if we go back and look at the period in which languages had their birth, does it not seem more natural to give first place to the concrete objects and only then express the relationship between them?

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Choroti SK 6

C 581 584 or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

C. 581 593 Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelīte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeőlitse simă*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C 585 Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 836 584 Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M 585 789 535 When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

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CHAPTER VI.

Birth customs.

M 843 Various customs are practised at the birth of a child, many of which are of a religious significance, their aim being to protect the new-born child and its mother against supernatural dangers. Both the ideas and the practices to which they give rise are much the same among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Tobas. As soon as the Indian woman feels herself to be pregnant she begins to observe certain rules with regard to her diet. She generally abstains from eating meat, contenting herself with maize and certain leaves. The Toba women during this time take particular T [843] care not to eat fish. and with other kinds of animal food she is cautious. Thus if she eats the paunch or the intestines of a cow she will fall ill and birth will be rendered more difficult. When the child arrives, it is washed in water, the umbilical cord is cut off with a snail's shell and guarded for M 844 some time with great care. If the cord were cut off with a knife, the child, it is believed, would soon die. No iron instrument must come in contact with the new-born babe. Again, the navel-string cut off must be guarded until the navel wound is perfectly healed. If it is thrown away prematurely, this would be the same as throwing away the life of the child, which would die in consequence. The umbilical cord, according to the idea of M the Indians, remains in some mysterious connection with the new-born ● [171] child. These ideas are found among all Pilcomayo tribes, but they seem to be common to all South American Indians living in a state of nature.

The rites and ceremonies taking place after the little one has arrived all depend on the belief of the Indians that there is a very intimate connection between the child and its mother, and that both of them are badly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits. Fully to understand them and the behaviour of the woman in child-bed we must first of all take into consideration that the Indian woman in general bears children with great

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)193? SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

ease, without suffering much pain. From the point of view of the savage it is of special importance that this should be so. As the *Choroti* explained the matter to me: if at the birth the woman is ill, this is due to her being possessed by an evil spirit, and the demon, owing to the close connection between mother and child, will also take possession of the latter causing it to fall ill and die. Hence the weakness and sickness from which possibly she is suffering must be concealed and reasoned away. The Choroti have a stereotyped phrase to express this: *lasihe ĩse lóuet = lahse ihe, eis lóuet*, that is: »when the child is born, the mother is well». As a matter of fact, a few hours after the delivery the Choroti woman is seen to move about doing some small tasks in the house, fetching water, preparing food, and so on. In short, she acts as if she were quite hearty, thus deceiving herself, her relatives, and the evil spirits. But the curious thing is that among the Choroti the *father* of the child, seemingly instead of the mother, lies in bed, looks weak, fasts, and is attended by the women, in short, behaves just as if he were the person who had given birth to the child and were suffering pains. The precaution which the woman shares with her husband, in addition to abstaining from hard work, is that she has to diet. Like him she avoids meat, limiting her diet to boiled and mashed maize, the leaves of certain trees and certain other vegetables.

This is the custom generally known under the name of *la couvade* (»hatching») and which among the Choroti exists in its most typical form. The father remains lying in bed for five or six days, or *until the navel-wound of the child is perfectly healed*. The reason for this is quite obvious and was, besides, expressly pointed out to me by the Indians. The navel-wound may become a dangerous source of infection, and the new-born child is in its most delicate condition during the first days or until the navel-wound is healed.

Before I give further explanations of the ideas underlying the couvade practices I shall say a few words about the birth customs of the Mataco and the Tobas. These tribes do not practice couvade in the proper sense of the word, but they have the same ideas about an intimate connection existing between the new-born child and both parents.

What I have stated as to the birth customs of the Choroti also holds true of those of the *Mataco*, with the exception that the Mataco father does not actually lie in bed. He has nevertheless to take certain precautions, and the fact that he pretends to be in a delicate condition during the first critical days of his child's life is shown by the expression the Mataco use of him. He is said to have an *aíttah limpáh*, that is to say.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI/2

T- 535 789 A peculiarity of the *Nomí* is that it is the only Toba dance which takes place in the day-time; in fact, it is *always* performed during the day, just as other dances are always performed at night. Of the reason of this I am not quite sure, but it is probably to be sought in the particular character of the dance. Most Indian dances are in their nature conjurations of evil spirits, and since these spirits move about especially at night, it is conceivable that the dances are, as a rule, night ceremonies. The dance *Nomí* again, chiefly has for its object the promotion of fertility and the ripening of the algaroba fruit and therefore takes place in the day, just as the Choroti dances, in so far as they have the same object, often take place in the day. It is true that the *Nomí* is also intended to conjure the ghosts of the dead, but these differ from other spirits precisely in that they are generally believed to visit their living relatives in the day-time, when the drinking-feasts are celebrated.

T [775]

M 789 535 The Mataco also have their festival dance, which in their language is called *Nakātin* or *Katináh*. It corresponds exactly to the Toba dance *Nomí*, and is performed during the algaroba season with the same object, namely, to secure an abundant harvest and to keep off the spirits of the dead, called *kasītah* by the Mataco.

M 171 Whether the Mataco have been influenced in this festival dance by their neighbours the Tobas, with whom they have considerable intercourse, I cannot say, but the idea that the dead like to visit the living at the time of the harvest and at the great drinking-feasts, is certainly familiar to many South American tribes. Thus the *Avas* and the *Chané*, who now live on the western border of the Chaco, but came originally to these regions from the north and cannot be reckoned among the Chaco tribes proper, especially practise dancing at their drinking-feasts. Since on this particular point there is an interesting analogy between the customs of the Avas and those of the Chaco tribes, I shall mention what I know about the drinking-feasts of the Avas and the Chané. Their sacred drink is maize beer, called *cangüi* in the Guarani language, which exactly corresponds to the sacred beers brewed from the algaroba and some other fruits in the Chaco. The *cangüi* festivals of the Avas as well as the dance performed in connection with them have been described by the Catholic missionaries, but none of them seems to have realized the religious significance of these ceremonies. The majority of these Indians are now Christians in name and strongly influenced by Christian civilization, having consequently dropped or greatly modified many of their ancient customs. I myself have only witnessed their

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Toba 5112
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eating of fish at the beginning of the wet season is likely to cause malarial fever. What is particularly dangerous in the fish, as the Indians told me, is the stomach; an evil spirit may hide in it. Therefore a person must abstain from eating this kind of food when he or she is in a delicate condition and exposed to the attacks of supernatural enemies. After a death it is the death-demon that is believed to have possibly taken up its abode in the stomach of the fish. In general, the rules of diet, both in regard to fish and in regard to other kinds of food, are always more strict for the women than for the men, and this is naturally due to the belief that the former have by nature less power of resistance against evil spirits than the latter.

Several other food restrictions exist among the Chaco tribes, and most of them are due to superstitious ideas of one kind or another. Just as the Choroti shun the meat of the deer, so I found among the Toba men an aversion to the meat of the wild pig, although this is a very tasty food. This may possibly be due to the idea that the wild pig is a »female» animal, as is also the armadillo. At any rate the Tobas have the belief that the souls of women particularly reincarnate themselves in the wild pig. All Chaco Indians likewise have an aversion to drinking the blood or milk of animals and eating the eggs of hens and of other birds. The Indians could give me no explanation as to this superstition, and it is possible that the original reasons for it are now forgotten. It is, however, highly probable that they shun blood and milk because they believe that the spirit or soul of the animal is in them. This is at any rate quite obvious with regard to blood, which plays an important part in native superstition. Thus among all tribes there appears a mysterious dread of shedding the blood of domestic animals. The Choroti for instance, when they have to slaughter a sheep or goat, never kill the animal by cutting its throat or shedding its blood in some other way, but always, according to old observance, by strangulation. The custom is professedly observed for fear of coming in contact with the blood of the animal. — For a similar reason, I believe, the Indians have originally abstained from eating eggs. The egg is the embryo of the bird, and in the embryo or foetus of an animal, according to primitive belief, its spirit has its abode in the same way as in its blood or milk. It is interesting in this connection to note what Mr. Grubb says of the analogous ideas of the Lenguas. »Milk, whether of the cow, goat, sheep, or mare, is never drunk. The older people seem to consider it unfit for them, and children are forbidden it because it is supposed that the milk upon which they

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

171 are nourished will influence them physically as well as in character, and the Indians have no desire that their children should in any way acquire the natures of such animals.[1])

262 826 774 The fear of eating the *heads* of certain animals is probably due to similar ideas. A menstruous woman, as we have seen, is forbidden to eat the head of a parrot, lest she should go mad or be changed into a tiger; and similarly a father, while he is observing the rules of the couvade, must abstain from eating the head of a cow. According to primitive belief the soul or vital power of the body is particularly concentrated in the hair and the head. That the head of a cow is especially regarded as taboo is comprehensible from the fact that animals imported by the whites are generally looked upon with superstitious fear and their flesh avoided by Indians still living in a state of nature.

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[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* p. 137.

primitiveness more accentuated than that of other tribes. They are among the dirtiest peoples of South America, and in the sense of cleanliness they are inferior to the Toba. 181 [516]

Matako material culture does not differ markedly from that of any of the other Chaco tribes. Their weapons are the same, their houses of the common beehive type, and their craftsmanship is hardly distinguishable from that of their neighbors. Judged outwardly, the Matako might be confused with the mass of Chaco cultures. A keen observer notices a slight superiority in the agriculture of the Matako,as compared with the Toba. The distinctive character of Matako culture may only be appreciated in contrast with that of the Toba-Pilagá. While the Matako are generally peaceful the Toba are warlike and have almost always been the conquerors in the far distant regions. However, it cannot be said that the Matako have not also fought bravely against their enemies or that they are lacking in military tradition. Still the contrast between them is striking even to an observer like myself who has spent only a short time among these Indians. The difference between these apparently identical cultures lies primarily in the stressing of religion and magic among the Matako in contrast with the relative unimportance of like interests among the Toba. Although built on the same pattern as that of the Toba, the culture of the Matako is interwoven with ceremonial activities, ritual dances, and expulsion of spirits. It is almost impossible to stay with a group of Matako more than one day without having the opportunity to attend some ceremony. The traditional blowing of medicine-men upon the sick occurs among the Matako as among other Chaco tribes. It is always associated with dances together with spells of magic and has rarely the individual character of the same ceremony among the Toba. Not only are the peformances of Matako medicine-men more impressive than those of other tribes in the same area, the external appearance of the medicine-man and his assistants denotes the great importance given to ritual details and 171 ● 105

accessories. The performers wear red wool frontlets trimmed with feathers on their heads, on their waists are feather belts, and rattles are tied on their feet. The magical power is attributed to every ornament, a belief less apparent among other Indians. So far as I know the Matako are the only Chaco tribe in which the medicine-men use narcotics. They use as snuff a powder made from the seeds of the *sebil* and through its use produce a state of trance during which their souls wander through the upper world. They wage collective war against disease and spirits and all of the ceremonies have a highly symbolical character. The Matako are very keen observers of taboos, mourning, for instance, is to them a very serious matter. This general interest in religion and the stress of religious beliefs in the native culture reveals itself in the Matako attitude toward Christianity. It is the general opinion of all of the missionaries with whom I discussed the question that the Matako are most eager to accept protestantism and that those who take the new faith do so seriously. They are not only interested in the exterior manifestations of religion, but they understand perfectly the moral problems and the subtilities of faith. The Matako who ask for baptism do so because they feel a genuine need for religion and the converted Indians do their best to adapt their living to new rules. The attitude of the Toba is quite different. They are amused by religion, they realize the help to be obtained from the missionaries, but they do not worry over much about the faith itself. They are light-hearted and and apathetic toward religion. The contrast between the two tribes has always impressed me and I noticed it immediately when I started to inquire about medicine-men. Information proffered by the Matako was always more detailed and extensive than that given by the Toba. The importance of religion to the Matako is not only revealed in spiritual crises; in the soul of a new convert modern religion affects his old life deeply.

000 I am aware that the ethnological material I gathered

3: Metraux .E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

duction of these tales to the Matako is quite recent since the Indians have been in regular touch with white settlers for only thirty or forty years.

The most important character in the Matako tales is familiar to all students of North American ethnology — he is the Trickster. His Matako name is *Takxwax*, *Tokxwax* or *Tawkxwax*, according to the region. The last form which I have adopted is used at Algarrobal, near Embarcación. My two informants agreed that *Tawkxwax* was a »loco» a fool and by this word they meant a practical joker, a person who likes to play harmful tricks on people. The bad people in the region were always referred to as »locos». The adventures of *Tawkxwax* strongly suggest those of the famous tricksters of North American ethnology. The resemblance is even more accentuated in the tales of other tribes. In the mythology of the Toba Pilagá the tricks or the adventures are attributed to the fox who is the South American equivalent of the Coyote. The perfect parallels between the stories concerning *Tawkxwax* and those in which the fox is the hero are so numerous and striking that I often tried to make the Matako confess that *Tawkxwax* was the fox of the other tribes. They always denied my identification and insisted that *Tawkxwax* was a man.

Everyone familiar with North American folklore will recognize in these tales many similarities between the Chaco tales and those which constitute the rich oral literature of North American tribes. I am too little acquainted with North American ethnology to draw parallels but no doubt they are numerous. The essential part played by the Trickster in mythology is a feature which cannot be neglected. Parallels between North American and South American Indian tales will be more obvious when I am able to issue the mythology of the Toba Pilagá that I had the opportunity to study more systematically and thoroughly than the Matako. The Matako mythology is only a short introduction to a more rich and complete material.

I must stress here that the material and the spiritual culture of the Chaco tribes — half nomadic, living on mesquite, game and fish — recalls many of the conditions prevailing among North American tribes, especially those in California and certain aspects of these of the prairies. Most of the parallels which have been drawn between North American and South American ethnology rest on the culture of the very tribes among whom I was lucky enough to get the tales which I present here.

Once more I should like to call the attention of ethnologists to the abundance of material which still may be collected in South America. For a few years more there will remain the opportunity to study primitive Indian cultures functioning in their entirety. But the extraordinary riches of South American ethnology are being wasted and lost. Every year sees the passing of a tribe or of a culture. Old medicine-men, knowing the traditions of their groups, die without transmitting their knowledge. Thus the chances of scrutinizing the past culture of America grow fewer each year. South America is the least known of all the continents and its tribes are the most mysterious peoples. May I give the alarm before it is too late to grasp the now plentiful material?

Unfortunately I had little opportunity to study the phonetics of the Matako language, and I am convinced that my transcriptions might be improved. I used the following system of transcription for the native words.

č is more or less like the Spanish »ch», but slightly palatalized.

x is a surd velar fricative.

k is an aspirated back palatal.

L is the voiceless »l».

ʔ stands for the glottal stop. Glottalized consonants though existing in Matako, do not appear in the words quoted in this paper. The vowel *a* has a different quality according to the region. Along the Pilcomayo is *a* a mid-back narrow sound quite near the open »o».

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

762 the victim awaits death. It is said that some men take poison to blackmail a woman into complying with their wishes.

It has been noticed time and again that only young people eat sachasandia as a rule. Among the cases cited above there is only one of an elderly woman who attempted to take her life. In this connection, the question arises of whether suicides are more common among women than among men. No data on this point have been gathered, but it is the impression of the missionaries that suicide is equally common among men and women with perhaps a slight majority among women. The first problem raised by the frequency of these suicides is whether the suicides are caused by new conditions of life —by culture clash and lack, of adjustment to a new world— or whether they were equally frequent formerly when the native culture still functioned? Since no Matako group now lives in its earlier surroundings, the truth of the matter will be difficult to learn. If the problem is presented to the missionaries who are largely responsible for the disappearance of the Indian culture, they always insist that suicides were one of the worst manifestations of the culture before the Indians were saved. They point out, moreover, that the number of suicides was particularly high at the time when the missionaries began their work in the region, and they establish a close relation between suicide and dancing. One of the missionaries wrote to me: "In the old days when the Indians were still dancing, there used to be as many as a dozen attempted suicides in one day, resulting in my being up most of the night going from one to another. They were so many and so frequent, however, and it happened so long ago that I can remember none in detail". This evidence is confirmed by other missionaries who recall that the worst epidemics always occured in connection with the night dances which have a decidedly sexual character. At such times young married men who took part in the entertainments slept with girls, thus arousing the jealousy of their wives and the anger of their mothers-in law. If as a result one or two people committed suicide, others would follow their example.

762 762 178 [797] 762 535 178 [837]

The link established between night dances and suicide was the main reason for the strict tabu against dancing which is now enforced in every mission. Indians have been made so aware of the evil of dancing that even little girls have been kept from their normal and charming jumping about. Missionaries, however, are not responsible for this measure; it has been self-imposed by the Indians.

762 171

No cases of suicide are known among other tribes who live in the same region and under similar conditions. At any rate, I have never

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

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most that can be said is that the mania found a suitable climate for continuation in that atmosphere of disintegration and pessimism. It must be remembered that similar crises have been observed from the very beginning of the missionary era. It may well be, therefore, that suicide was an institutionalized form of protest under the conditions of the earlier culture undertaken for some concrete reason by one individual who could not otherwise effectively punish members of the in-group, and followed by others whose desires were kindled by the first example.

Suicides seem to have occurred with relative frequency among the Kaingang who were gathered on a reservation in the State of Sao Paulo. Since in certain cases they seem to have been caused by analogous situations to those found among the Matako, the following passage by Manizer may be of interest: "Suicides caused by family quarrels are very common. I know of several cases: Cagndiri attempted to hang herself because of some affair with her husband's brother; for that reason she was expelled from home. Vangrikuiix tried to hang herself when her husband planned to abandon her. Naxo's wife hanged herself to death because of an affair with her husband's brother, quite a young man. Old Karege's son killed himself by hanging after a quarrel with his wife who had refused to eat palmito which he had brought back trom the forest. There were two other cases of suicide during the two years the Kaingang were under supervision." [1]

The cases of suicide among South American natives listed by Wise, in his book "Selbstmord und Todesfurcht bei den Naturvolkern" (Zutphen, 1933) are based on vague references in the travel literature of the last century and as a rule are valueless for science.

[1] Les Kaingangs, 23th International Congress of Americanists, New York, 1928, p. 760–761.

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Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 179 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171] M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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[152]

in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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[173]
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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

101 of the Salado (1) River to the Pilcomayo, hemmed in towards the
131

1. From Matará northwards.

mountains by tribes of Quichua influence and others, and in the direction of the Río de la Plata by nations of the Toba-Guaycurú type. This vast region was bounded on the north by Chiriguano territory, and on the south by the Quichuas and Pampas of the Guaycurú-Querandí type.

It appears at present that the basin of the Salado River ceased
●174 to be territory of the nomad Matacos who, in the past century, were replaced by the Mocovíes and other tribes of a more definite Guycurú type. Lozano in his first volume and on page 175 (Lamas Ed.) says that "gasta" means town in the Tonocoté language. This being the case these tribes must have entered the valleys of Yocavil and Londres also, for all the Andean region is full of places whose names end in "gasta" (2). According to my observations "gasta" is as Cacan a word

2. In none of the Mataco-Mataguayo dialects does the term "gasta" appear.

as is "ao."

In any case one thing must needs be conceded and that is that the Mataco tribes had shifted towards the southwest up to the Aconquija range. [611]

221 The Matacos, like the Tobas and other Guaycurú nations are and were nomads, and of course one cannot indicate exactly the areas frequented by them when they were on the move; at one time they would go in one direction, at another in another, according to pressure from more warlike tribes or from the Spaniards.

All agree that after the Spanish conquest numerous tribes of
221 Matacos or Tonocotés withdrew towards the Pilcomayo River basin and
174 this is exactly what would have been expected because there they were less exposed to Spanish raiders who would carry off any Indian they found to forced labor; these they used to call piezas "pieces of ordinance"--Translator].

197 and we are assured that they differed more in language than in their manner and customs, that is to say, that they had in them a good bit of Toba, Mocoví and Abipón. This, linguistically speaking is a fact, for those differences to which the missionaries made reference are lexical rather than grammatical in character. Pronouns, their particles, suffixes of plurality, all point to a common origin, that is, to hybridization.

It is common knowledge that the Matacos and Tobas always went about together, as though they recognized their kinship.

These considerations induce me to believe that the Matacos are
● [174] the offspring of Guaycurú fathers and Lule mothers; and the Tobas, a mixture of Guaycurúes and Matacos.

The Guaycurúes are related linguistically to the Guaraníes, and these, in turn, to the Caribes and Mojo-Maypures, and they may also be related to the Matacos.

That Mataco has some Guaraní and Chaquense (Guaycurú, Toba, Mocoví, etc. tribes) is to be gathered since all of them prefix their pronominal particles; but the strange thing is that Quichua also has a place here, it being of all the most prone to suffixing.

All these linguistic anomalies can be explained if we admit
174 what Montecinos says, that approximately since 500 B.C. to about 500 A.D. there were successive massive invasions of Perú from Brasil and Tucumán.

Observation teaches us that first and second person singular
197 pronouns and first (excluding the hearer) [613] person plural, correspond
174 to the predominant group, be it by conquest or for some other reason. It is precisely in these persons that the analogy between Quichua and Mataco are most exact, it being only proper to give warning that Mataco, like Mojo, is logical even in its possessive particles, a phenomenon which does not occur in Quichua. (1)

1. Because "Ñokha" is--"I"; "y" subfixed--"my" or "mine," in Quichua.

Aymará and Araucano register the same pronominal influence and such analogies lead us to seek craniological proof, and also to study Mataco along with Quichua Aymará and Araucano.

Let us suppose that the Chaco, or rather the highlands which sur-
174 round it, had been occupied by tribes corresponding to those we call Lules

● 174 and Quichuas, a peaceful people, docile and given to civilization, shall we say Diaguitas or Pueblo people. With the passage of time these would be attacked by nomadic tribes, Juries, a more or less Guaycurú type:- these latter would overrun the territory, killing and laying waste, taking possession of the land and of the women and children of the defeated.

From interbreeding with the Lules, to judge from the language, the Vilela and other similar nations could have sprung; and from contact with the Andean group, the Mataco nation and its ramifications.

Other hordes would sweep into the land at a later date, of a more pronounced Guaycurú type and by extermination on one hand and interbreeding on the other, there would spring up the Mocoví, Abipon, and the Toba, which latter, as I believe is a cross between Mataco and Mocoví, that is, Guaicuru [sic].

The Lengua, Payaguá and remaining tribes of the Guaycurú type still remain to be studied, but the preceding observations seem to explain, up to a point, the genesis of the Chaco Indians.

An interesting link is still missing, and that is the Charrúa. The most ferocious and indomitable of all the Indians ever encountered in Argentina, who did not give in even to the efforts of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus. A people given to swallowing up others, and later itself cornered in Uruguay, it disappeared from its theater of operations leaving only the meagerest traces of its existence. Yet the time was when it used to sweep the basins of the Paraná, Uruguay and Río de la Plata. When the Spaniards arrived, and for two centuries more they were the scourge of Santa Fé, Entre Ríos and Montevideo. Because their [624] language was guttural and very difficult, I claim them as being of the original Guaycurú type, that Chaco grouping which was an offshoot from Carib stock, at its most savage.

It is logical to attribute to the most warlike tribes a share in the heritage of the ferocious Mocovíes, Tobas, etc., and to suppose that the purer the blood, the less will be the disposition to take on the Quichua or European civilization.

Today it is the task of anthropology to resolve this problem. In the place where the Lules were snuffed out in the past century there must be considerable skeletal remains. The same must be the case with the Charrúa burial grounds in Uruguay. We still have the Matacos, Tobas, Mocovies, etc., with us. Let us hope then that men competent

●174 in these matters will give serious study to these skulls and in that way confirm my hypothesis based on what the languages themselves allow us to glimpse.

114 The ethnology of a given people, if it is to be of value, must include the anthropology of that people. The language alone is insufficient because of the well known tendency to adopt foreign elements on both a large and a small scale.

I am sorry that I do not know as much as does Quatrefages; but if a man as eminent as he is has had to confess his ignorance in linguistic matters, much more so may I leave the question open until such time as the anthropological problems which Argentina poses to the authorities in that field, have been solved. I am satisfied to point out the paths which I believe I have found and to declare that judging by extant languages, everything in the Chaco is a mixed bag.

Further than this I do not dare to push my hypothesis. Let this quote from Quatrefages found in his "Hommes Fossiles et Hommes Sauvages" [Fossil Men and Savage Men] serve me as an excuse: "Furthermore in problems of this kind the physical characteristics are in every way more conclusive as evidence than all others. A nation can change in language, in customs, in industries, sometimes in a relatively short period; but height, skin, cranial shape—that cannot be lost so quickly" (p. 577). [615]

XXII

The Language of the Matacos

One of the mysteries of modern linguistics is the lack of information on this interesting group of languages, spoken by tribes which still occupy a considerable territory in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos.

Little enough was known about the Mocoví, Abipon, and Lule, but that little was enough to reveal the grammatical workings of the respective languages. Yet about Mataco neither Hervas nor Adelung

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK6

Chapter II.

General characteristics and material culture.

In their physical characteristics the *Choroti* and the *Mataco* show the same affinity as appears in their languages. Both of them are strongly built and of middle height, the Mataco somewhat taller than the Choroti. The average height of the former seems to be about 163 or 164 cm. for the men and 154 or 155 cm. for the women; of the latter about 162 or 163 cm. for the men and 152 or 153 cm. for the women. In their sturdy appearance the Mataco resemble the mountain Indians, and in former times there has probably been intermarriage between them and the Quichuas. The hair of both tribes is black, coarse and straggling and is worn long by both men and women, except when it is temporarily cut short for ceremonial reasons. The eyes are dark-brown, the nose somewhat flattened, and the features of the face generally irregular, especially among the Mataco. Both tribes know the custom of tattooing the face, the women being always tattooed, the men only in some cases, and never as completely as the women.

I need not dwell upon the physical characteristics of the *Tobas* since they have been described by nearly all authors ever since Lozano. They certainly form an easily recognisable type of Indian, differing considerably from the rest of the Chaco tribes, one salient feature being their remarkably tall and strong build of body. The Tobas are in fact among the tallest of all South American Indians, being in this respect comparable with the ancient Patagonians, to whom they were probably related, as well as with the present Ona Indians of the mainland of Tierra del Fuego. The physical anthropology of the Tobas, just as that of the Mataco and the Choroti, has been studied scientifically by the German anthropologist Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche. [1])

[1]) Lehmann-Nitsche, R. *Estudios antropológicos sobre los Chiriguanos, Chorotes, Matacos y Tobas* (*Anales del Museo de La Plata*. Buenos Aires, 1908).

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464]

In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101

These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197

They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224

Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756]

They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

Historical References

I

127 If we were to affirm that the Matacos or Mataguayos are first mentioned in the writings of the Missionary Fathers, we would expose ourselves to correction when, at some future date, the archives of our motherland be better known. However, lacking such facts, and without having the work of Father Salinas at hand, I must necessarily begin by setting down what Father Techo says in his Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay [History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay].

●175 Refer to volume I, chapters 40 to 43 etc., which include the years 1590, 1591 and 1592.

In the first of these years Fathers Pedro Añasco and Juan Fonte arrived at Tucuman, at the same time that the famous and apostolic Father Alonso Bárcena was evangelizing the Lules, those on the slopes of (Mount) Aconguija, not those under Father Machoni's care. Father Bárcena, full of good works, toiled without ceasing among those belligerent Indians, underfed and in imminent danger of losing his life, but undismayed for all that, so much so that when called to order by his superior he answered with these noble and heart felt words [Latin parallel text omitted. See foreign text--Translator]: "I shall go to you as soon as possible, Father, and at your feet I shall say: Here I am; send me, be it that you return me to the Lules, or to the Calchaquies, to the Chaquenses or the Frontones, or to the uttermost ends of the earth, for I desire with an insatiable longing to be sent where I may suffer all things in behalf of those souls who are to be saved."

It is quite apparent here that the good Father differentiated be-
[114] tween Lules, Calchaquies, Chaquenses and Frentones. In my opinion the Chaquenses were the Mataraes, Matacos or Mataguayos who spoke the Tonocoté language. [564]

II

The Matará People

In chapter 41 Father Techo goes on to tell how the Spaniards founded the city of Concepción del Bermejo, 30 leagues from the point

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175 at which the Bermejo river flows into the Paraguay, with the object of converting the numberless tribes which surrounded it. It was estimated that a hundred thousand Indians lived in the environs and Fathers Fonte and Angulo were their teachers. Almost all of the groups of Indians were Frontones, [Frente = Forehead--Translator], a name which was given to them because of their habit of shaving off the hair on the forward part of their heads.

These Indians hung clubs and handsful of arrows at their belts, and carried a staff or rod to which were attached many fish jaws, which looked like saws. They would go about naked, their bodies covered with paint to inspire terror. They were very jealous of their borders, and by way of warning they would hang the bodies of the enemies they had killed on trees. They were nomadic, and carried their camps from one place to another. [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator].

"Practically every group has a different tongue, and to such a degree does this variety reach that one can say that some eight languages are spoken on either side of the Bermejo river. And the greatest impediment in teaching these people is this variety of languages."

Many of these Indians must have belonged to those whom we call Matacos, yet not necessarily Frentones, since Techo says:- "Pooro gentem ferme hanc omnem ideo Frontones Hipani vocabant," which is the same as saying almost, but not all, were Frentones. That some must have been Matacos can be deduced from the end of Chapter 41: [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator] "But Barcena and Añasco, after leaving the territory of Tucuman, had reached the city of Concepcion, intending to establish themselves among the Matarães; and from there, as circumstances might permit, to go to the Frentones and try to win them over."

It is quite clear from this that the documents which Father Techo referred to made a clear distinction between Matarães and Frentones, since the former were Matacos and the latter Guaycurúes, i.e., Tobas, Mocovíes, Abipones, etc. [565]

III

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797 Description of the Matarães - Chapter 42. Year 1591.

For many reasons it is here advisable to reproduce the Latin text [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator]: "The

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175 Matará nation, compared to the other neighboring tribes, is very
797 docile. They used to live scattered about in small groups, as is the custom of the Barbarians, until Alonso Vera, founder and Adelantado of Concepción, made them live together in a town, and had most of them baptized. Evil having become rampant however, it happened that they were unfortunate enough to have as their first Ministers of the Sacrament priests who were absolutely worthless, to the point that they were completely ignorant of even the most elemental mysteries regarding Christian matters. After receiving baptism, not one of the neophytes had ever practiced holy confession. Among almost seven thousand inhabitants many were unbaptized, some being children and some adults. The facilities of the place however were in no way pleasant, humanly speaking—drinking water, muddy and stagnant, was collected when it rained in holes dug in the earth by hand. Corn and a type of pumpkin was their sole food. But that awfulness, both of men and of the place, the great suffering, and the attempting of difficult things for Christ, far from discouraging the members of the Company who took on the task, served only to gladden them. And they, distributing the tasks among themselves and using the Tonocoté language, brought about in a short time, that no one among that whole populace live in concubinage, having anything to do with the superstitions of their forebears or dare, on Sundays or other holy days to be absent from the sermon or from doctrinal classes. Most of them, by dint of frequent confession, were free from all guilt and penalty, disciplined themselves rigorously each week and with the utmost reverence toward the Body of Christ, communed. All were under the guidance of teachers who taught them both publicly and privately those religious exercises practiced by christians of long standing, for the edification of the people." [566]

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175 The mild Matáres put up with a great deal. And while the good
797 Fathers were evangelizing these docile catechumens, they were doubling their efforts in another direction, as Father Techo recounts in chapter 43 [Latin parallel text omitted--Translator]: "But that work was as nothing compared to the other undertaken by the Fathers when they exerted themselves in the learning of the several languages spoken by the Frentones. The Frentones being actually the reason for their coming, they must needs learn the language they used in order to be of any help to them. Thus it was that, in the course of a year and

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●175 a half, Alonso Bárcena, an old man 65 years of age, on fire with zeal
797 to win souls for Christ, sharing his studies with Pedro Agnasco, learned the Guarany, Natica, Quisoquina, Abipona, and Quiranguica languages, and put together vocabularies, grammars, doctrinal teachings and sermons, each for its respective use. Both of these men, before leaving Tucuman, had mastered and worked out a grammar and lexion of the Tonocoté, Kakana, Paquina and Quirandica languages, so that the Fathers who might be about to enter districts where these languages were spoken would have the way made easier. And in order that their usefulness be more widely disseminated Pedro Agnasco transcribed most of them many times, particularly the work which Alonso
M Bárcena had done, in a very neat hand, and, thus copied out, he gave
C them out for general use."

114 We have here a series of very interesting facts, for not only do we learn to distinguish between one tongue and another, but we discover also the origin of that valuable Toba MS, which is at present in General Mitre's library, attributed to Father Bárcena, and which actually is very neatly written, and was not in the least bit troublesome when a transcription of it had to be made for the series on Argentine Languages. The two famous notebooks, although hardly full enough to learn Toba from, are invaluable, because they allow us to see the Toba spoken in 1592.

The chapter referred to ends with a well deserved eulogy of Fathers Bárcena and Agnasco. How many evil things can be accounted to the expulsion of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus! To that event we owe the many gaps in the chain of American languages [567]. The confusion and loss of documents was widespread, calamitous and even down to the present day we are lacking those grammars of the Kaka and Tonocoté languages which are of so much interest to history, ethnology and linguistics.

IV

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The Mission to the Frentones, time lost and other Matará matters.

Devoratis tot linguarum difficultatibus, says Father Techo in chapter 44. The missionaries began their efforts toward the Frentones via

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175 797 the Mogosnas and Naticas. "Verum (nevertheless), Deum immortalem, quo successu?" The Mogosnas had killed Francisco Vera de Aragon, the Frentones were in a state of great turmoil, and the Fathers had no other recourse but to return to their base mission among the Matarães. On that occasion no good was harvested fron so much effort expended on learning the languages of the Frentones; but linguistics as a whole did gain something, and once again the Faners of the Company gave evidence that for them martyrdom was glory.

In 1596 Gaspar Monroy and Juan Viana visited the Tonocotés and traversed the territory previously evangelized by Father Bárcena. (Techo, "Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica lel Paraguay," L. II, cap. 8). [Techo, History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, Vol. II, Chap. 8].

In 1608 Father Diego Torres essayed to traverse these districts, and regarding this journey Father Techo recounts the following in Book III, Chapter 28 [Parallel Latin text onitted--Translator]. "The state of the Frentones was a sad one, for they wished nothing other than to continue in their perverse cutoms, dominated by the enemy of the human race. And on seeing them spread out in their forays to the very frontiers of Perú, and on becoming aware that the Abipones, Matacos, Naticas, Mogosnas, and Tonocotés, nations related to the Frentones, were bound in the ame captivity because of lack of priests, he felt himself constrained following the example of Saint Xavier, to return to Europe and, in he Universities of Spain and Italy, to try by dint of exhortation to awaken among the students a feeling of compassion toward such peoples." [568]

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114 This quote is an important one, for even if we cannot be sure that Father Techo used the [Latin] term "agnatis" in its true and restricted meaning—relatives on the father's side—he has nevertheless given us a piece of ethnic-linguistic information of great importance and which he doubtless had from some well-informed person. If the Tonocotes, Mataguas and Mataguayos are our present day Matarães it is clear that they must have had ethnic and linguistic affinities with the other nations of the Guaicurú type, as will later on be demonstrated.

The peaceableness of the Matarães contrasted with the extreme fierceness of the Frentones is remarkable. This difference must be attributed to atavism, and from it we shall be able to derive something of interest, as will be seen later.

1: Pelleschi--11 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

V

What Father Techo Says

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It is here necessary to transcribe fully chapter 15 of Book VIII, and year 1628, (1) at which time Don Felipe de Albornoz was governor

1. Techo

of Tucumán, whose term of office is famous because it was then that the great uprising took place which resulted in the destruction of the city of Londres and its re-founding in the Valley of Poman (1633). [Latin parallel text omitted--Translator].

"The year 1628 was of note because of the Apostolic Mission which was to go out from Tucumán to the Chaco Indians. The Province of the Chaco holds within its borders an immense territory almost circular in shape, comprising the diocese of Paraguay, Tucumán, Río de la Plata, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and also the archidiocese of Charcas. This Province is watered by rivers which have their birth in the mountains of Perú, and which after running their lengthy course empty into large lakes or into the rivers Paraguay or de la Plata. At the first appearance of the Spaniards many of the inhabitants of Tucumán and Perú migrated to that place, out of fear of the new regime, an affirmation which is bolstered by the fact that even today one can find there people whose language is Aymará, the vulgar (2) language of the

2. Common

Peruvians. The [569] better known nations are: The Taimvias, who used to occupy 188 towns, the Teutas, Mataguayos, Agoyas, Tobas, Yapitalagas, Mocovíes, Churumatas, Tonocotés, Abipones and several groupings of Indians who are different in language but not much in customs. Among these Indian nations there is not one which lords it over the other, rather, as is the custom among the Barbarians, are they organized in family groups and villages, and subject to their chiefs. The individuals who belong to that people, each in accord with the reigning superstition, choose out of several types of fish one as the patron and protector of their lives, which they worship so punctiliously

C 175 that they would rather die of starvation than eat a morsel of a fish of that kind. They live in a state of perpetual war, both among themselves and with the neighboring nations, which seem terrible to the outsider more on account of their cruelty than of their scope." This is an invaluable statement for both the ethnologist and the filologist. The mention made of the Aymará tongue confirms what I have suspected regarding the linguistic contact between the Aymaras and the Chaquenses of the Mocoví type. It is a pity that the careful Father does not say who those Indians were who spoke Aymará.

Lozano recounts in Book IV, Chapter 1, the following: that about the year 1532 there was a great drouth in Tucumán. The doleful natives consulted their witchdoctors. These latter painted a grim picture of what was to come, and many, giving credence to these prophecies, went off "towards the Province of the Chaco, where their miserable descendants eke out an existence etc."

It is clear then that the tradition regarding those large migrations to the Chaco is one of long standing and acceptance; but that does not mean necessarily that all the Indians which are to be found there are the progeny of a single invasion. Above all else we must bear in mind what Garcilazo de la Vega says in his Historia [History].

C M 114 175 It appears that the Taimvias must have been the Lenguas, Payaguáes etc. who wore the button or "tembetá." This word probably derives from the Guaraní "tembé'—the lower lip—which is the one disfigured with these ornaments or lip plugs. Just as the term Orejones ["oreja" means "ear"--Translator] is applied to all those who use a disc or circular piece in that part of their anatomy, and Frentones are those who shave off the hair on the fore part of their heads, so also was the name Lenguas given to those who use lip plugs.

The Mosovias are the Moscovies, since "cc" [570] (strong guttral) becomes "s" by a process of degeneration; and that is why we find Father Tavolini spelling it Moscovitas.

Here again Mataguayo and Tonocoté tribes are brought together with others of the Toba-Mocoví type, with the warning, "diversitate linguarum quam moribus dissimiliores." This is a fact, as will be seen later; but I can say now, by way of anticipation, that it proves for us that the Mataco language is the result of linguistic hybridization in which the lexicon stems from one lineage and the grammatical usage from another.

VI

C M 175 Father Techo adds immediately that the Governor of Paraguay had attempted to force his way to Perú through the Chaco but had had to abandon the attempt because of Indian resistance. In the year that this event took place (1628) the Governor of Tucumán managed to get a foothold in this region and in his wake came the Fathers of the Company [of Jesus], on a mission to both Indians and Spaniards. The author continues [Latin parallel text omitted--Translator]: "A good many chiefs of different Indian grouping met with him there, and he came to an agreement with them regarding the sites on which were to be founded three towns, similar to those of Paraná. The estimated number of those whose language he knew was 50,000. Those who spoke the Mataguayo tongue were said to number 30,000. Neither did he neglect the language of the Tobas, Mocovíes and Zapitalagas, extraordinarily numerous nations, partly because many of these people clamored to be admitted to the Christian faith and partly because it was hoped that their territory might provide a springboard to further the advance into the provinces which lay beyond, which were even more extensive. He also tried to learn the Churumata language, which bears that name probably because the sound "chuchu" occurs so frequently in it. When Martín Ledesma, the Governor, continued on his march to found another city on the banks of the Solota (1) river,

1. Socotonis or Esteco (?).

our Osorio remained [571] among the Tobas for the purpose of fixing upon the site for a new town in which to bring together and convert the Barbarians, and from that place, writing to the Provincial, he said that there was need for the founding of three towns in the territory of the Tobas, Mocovíes, and Zapitalagas, if enough Fathers could be found for the purpose. He added that the Indians of the interior were so tall that he could hardly reach their heads with his raised hand."

One can see from this how numerous the Indians of the Mataguayo nation were, and also that the Tobas were always near them, a phenomenon which continues to be true to this day.

SI7 Mataco SI7
Choco Indians SK4
Tonocote SI13

VII

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175 We take a jump forward now to the year 1641 and Book XIII, chapters 4 and 5 of Techo's work. There we see that Father Juan Pastor, Rector of the Colegio de Esteco [Esteco School], with another priest, penetrated the Matará country to a distance of 80 leagues from Esteco. Following which we are told that these Indians were much addicted to drunkenness: they were in the habit of holding "circular" orgies, each taking turn in inviting the others.

These were the two-day drinking bouts—there were others which lasted longer and were called "honors," and were held in honor of their ancestors toward the end of the year, the object of which was to drink as much as possible. The guests presented themselves in line and offered the host of the party an ostrich which a beautiful girl carried on her head. And if the obsequies were in honor of more than one dead person, the ostriches were equal in number to the number of the deceased.

The host was obliged to give a small present to the owner of each ostrich, with the prior condition that the latter would repay in kind—and from the breaking of this pact grew the bloodiest fights. The obligation affected not only those present but also their children and grandchildren in the direct line.

After three days of funeral feasting they would weep for a whole hour, and then would start to laugh loudly, to dance and to participate in the general orgy. And the worst of the matter was that those people called themselves Christians and boasted that their forebears [572] had been catechized by the apostolic fathers Alonso Bárcena and Pedro Añasco.

The custom referred to of presenting ostriches at funeral ceremonials is extremely curious, since at interments in the Calchaquí region we found the "suri" or ostrich used as an ornament on the burial containers, a fact which can be verified at the Museo Nacional [National Museum] and at the Museo de La Plata [Museum of La Plata].

From being among the Matarães Father Pastor went over to
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●M visit the Abipones, and when he was surrounded by them he spoke to
●175 them in "Tonocotan and Guaraní" and the result was so far favorable that he was able to open the mission.

Two years later (1643) we find that the missions were advancing into Matagua and Mataguayo territory. Book XIII, chapter 24. We also

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M read in the same place that the most commonly used language in the
175 Chaco was the Tonocoté, that it was not Toba or the language of Cuzco, for it says there that "Father Juan Oloris knew the language of the Incas, and was learning Tonocoté, which was the language of the Chaco mission."

VIII

What Father Lozano Says

M What precedes has been extracted from the work of Father Techo.
114 I shall now do likewise with the Descripción Chorográfica [Chorographic
128 Description] of the Chaco written by Father Lozano and published in Córdoba in 1733.

This author retold most of what Father Techo had written in this regard, but also added many details of interest which illustrate the former text and serve to eliminate some doubts. In this chapter I shall set down all that Lozano has said about the Matacos or Mataguayos, and the references will be to the pages of the book written by this priest.

Speaking of the Paraná river, page 25, he says: "The region which this great river waters in the Chaco is inhabited by the infidel Abipones, some Mocovíes who fled from the Salta frontier, and the Callagaes, who at one time used to be called Matarães."

Father Lozano devotes pages 39 and 51 to recounting the tradition, which he relates in his history of Tucumán, [regarding Indian migration under Spanish pressure--Translator] to explain the cause for the Chaco's dense population. Undoubtedly the Chaco was the apparent refuge [573] for the more belligerent Indians and for those in revolt, and it is probable that what was happening then was a repetition of the numberless previous migrations of a like kind. Those who were dissatisfied and answered to the Inca also fled to the Chacos.

M On page 51 Lozano gives a list of the nations inhabiting the
175 Chaco from which I shall extract the following by reason of its being relevant to this study: "Mataguayos ... Amulalaes, in times past called Matarás ... Tonocotés ... Chunipies ... Callages ...

"On the river Pilcomayo, at a distance of 40 leagues from the Andean mountains live the Tobas and Mataguayos, the two nations numbering about 4,000 members and who are eaters of human flesh." (page 53). As ever the Tobas live as close neighbors to the Matacos.

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175 "Some 60 leagues from the mountains, the marshes of the Pilcomayo River, in the direction of the river Bermejo, are peopled by numerous Tonocotés and Lules who drew away from the territory of Tucumán at the time of the appearance of the first Spanish conquerors." (page 54)

"The nation which lives on the other side of this one (the Teuta) (1)

1. Possibly from "teuj-taj," meaning "big river," the Mataco name for the river Bermejo.--J. Pelleschi.

is the Mataguaye nation, which is the one closest to Jujuy." (page 76)

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191 "Some are called Mataguayes Coronados and others Mataguayes Churumatas. The Coronados speak Guaraní, although this is not their mother tongue. The Mataguayes Churumatas understand and speak several tongues, such as Quichoa [sic], Guarany [sic] and Ocloya which they pick up from the captives which they hold as prisoners in their territory. They also understand the language of the Tobas. These

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175 Mataguayes were distributed in the following fifty towns: Neantiche,
621 Mocoy, Collemage, Auncapinhe, Hucohas, Hocohá, Oyaha, Natetehá,
109 Chinitiohé, Onin, Anuyguay, Alesnuy, Chayabo, Chioquiose, Hucoha, Chayquehé, Chachinamí, Pelo, Cahotochin, Nacalgoy, Chenesse, Halcacha, Cheneschá, Peque, Nitilinquin, Guays, Guocopa, Hucuchinami, Tiuquiahó, Hocalá, Leguelsehá, Oyaho, Carininquin, Yantis, Luguarache, Neglisehé, Loquelesse, Queyshé, Cotonhá, Tapela, Onoralgualache, Poytin, Hopitata, Hopitahé, Tatotehé, Lechonehá, Lohoteá, Tactoy, Apagatin, Rimpihá." (page 76)

194 Not one single time do we find the ending "gasta," although something similar to "a" and "aho" does appear. A negative proof must not be given undue importance, yet it ought not to be completely ignored [574].

IX

The Description of the Mataguayos etc. continues

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175 "All these nations which we have mentioned with their towns, that is: Taynuyes, Teutas, Mataguayes, Agoyas, Xolotas, Tobas, Mocobies, Yapitalaguas, and also Aguilotes who live among the

C M 175 Mocobies, and the Palomos, which are almost at an end, all have the same customs, and are similar in every way, which is the reason for our lumping them together in order to speak of them as a whole, without differentiating between one and another. All are Caribs, eaters of human flesh, abominable in the extreme, untrustworthy and much given to warring, which flares up amongst them easily. They sometimes fight against the Guaycurús, and do so continuously against the Spanish although in their attacks upon the Spaniards they are more like thieves than soldiers for they never face them but rather attack by surprise and by ambush, making very sure before doing so of the enemy strength by C M 175 726 means of spies. These latter are tireless in their spying and will keep watch upon the Spanish positions for a year or two or three, observing everything very carefully under cover of darkness, to see whether they will meet with resistance or not, and until they are absolutely sure of their superiority, they bide their time; so when they do attack one can be sure that the result can be but one, and that there is no danger in it for them. These spies creep about at night on all fours, so that their elbows are covered with callouses, and they never attack, since they are alone, and if they are heard they scurry away with great ease, and some with the help of magic take the shape of some tame animal in order to go about their spyings more easily. Although they will not openly face the Spanish, they will, when escape is impossible, fight valorously, and sell their lives dearly, as can be seen every day and as was experienced five years ago by an officer commanding the regiment of the city of Santiago del Estero who, coming upon five Mocovíes in the forest, surrounded them with his men, but they resisted bravely, wounding many Spaniards before dying, and the last who remained alone with his wife, continued to keep up the battle, his wife supplying him with arms, and would not give himself up until he was riddled with bullets, having first wounded many Spaniards with his arrows, the C M commanding officer almost mortally. The weapons which they all use 175 [575] are arrows, clubs and darts, which they fashion expertly from a 411 certain hard wood. Their darts are very long, about 15 hand breadths, and very heavy, but they use them with great dexterity and agility. The head is made from the antlers of deer, and is not firmly embedded in the shaft but rather is loose and has a small cord tied to it so that when the dart is jabbed into the body of an enemy and the shaft quickly snatched out, the point remains in the wound and the enemy kept from escaping by means of the cord, for the lance head cannot be pulled

C M 175 411 [III] from the body without making the wound much longer because a barb is carved into it and this impedes its being drawn out. If they have time they invariably decapitate those of their enemies whom they wound in battle, and they do this with great dexterity as they find the joint between the vertebrae in a moment and sever the head with one slash of their knives made from the jawbone of the "palometa" [a vicious type of fish which also goes by the name of "piraña"--Translator]. After the head has been severed the scalp is removed and then stretched and dried, and kept in order to celebrate their more important fiestas and to demonstrate their bravery.

C M 175 492 "They used, in the old days, to go about on foot, but they have since become great horsemen having stolen large numbers of horses from the ranches and towns of the Spaniards. From the city of Santa Fé alone and in the space of only 20 years they have made off with some 15,000 horses. That is why they are such good riders today, surpassing the Spaniards. Running after a fleeing horse and using only their lances to help them off the ground they will leap upon it and mount either from the side or from behind. They do not use stirrups and their saddles are very meager affairs, so much so that they often ride saddleless, but so swiftly that only rarely can the Spanish overtake them for they make their horses fly by whipping them with a three tailed lash which they always carry with them. When on the warpath they are happy with but skimpy rations which each carries for himself, and they make fun of the many preparations which the Spaniards make since they, with a small amount of half-grilled meat and whatever they can glean from the countryside in the way of fruit or other things undertake treks of a hundred leagues to wage war, their bed being the hard ground or at most a stiff cowhide. But this is nothing unusual for them since their beds are hardly of better stuff when they are at home.

C M 175 513 554 "These latter are made of straw which is spread all over the floor of their habitation which, although low-ceilinged, is very long in order to allow room for the whole family group to stretch out, each family having its own fire in the center. The oldest lies down [576] at the head in the place of greatest prestige and then, on either side, his sons according to age, followed by the grandchildren and other descendents, each with their families in such a manner that the way in which they lie down to sleep is a living representation of the family tree. They have no covering other than the branches and grasses with which they thatch their hovels, and in which a fire burns continually.

The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

∞ The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 175 291 "The men usually go about stark naked without a stitch on, although their skins are so tanned by the rough weather that they seem to be covered by animal hide or leather, particularly the old men, who are numerous, because the inclemencies of weather do not harm them, they having been used to such rigors since childhood. I saw in Santa Fé the head of a Mocobí Indian, who must have been about 40 years old, the skin of which was more than half a finger thick. The women go about entirely covered, from head to toe, in animal skins, and the principal women attire themselves in cloth made from a pliant plant larger than the agave, which in this province is called "chaguar" and grows wild. From it they make a thread similar to that used by cobblers, and then weave their clothes to which the daughters and wives of the more important men add some black and white ornamentation. From this same fibre they also make jars which, C M [175] cemented over with wax, can hold water pretty well and also the beverages with which they get drunk.

"All the women paint their faces, breasts and arms in the C M 302 175 same manner as the moorish women of Africa and Spain, and those of most consequence do this in intricate patterns which remain in [304] the skin permanently, for their mothers from the day they are born start to fix the dyes in their very flesh with the help of the large sharp bones of certain fish. They also use a dark blue dye, although not to such an extent, on their male children. In addition to this the mothers pluck the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, leaving a completely bald swath three fingers wide running from the forehead to the crown of the head on which the hair never grows again. Thus do the Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies and Aquilotes go about, both men and women, and the latter are extremely ugly as a consequence although, to their thinking, they are very beautiful. And in order that the women pull their hair out, the Devil is wont to appear to them in the form of an Indian woman who comes out of the nearest forest covered with a net and tells them that those who will not allow themselves to be plucked are not to eat fish, for should they do so, they will die. [577] So that if some C M [262] woman, fearing the pain, resists having her hair pulled, she later allows it so as to be able to eat fish which is their favorite food. Others of these Indian nations do not make these pathlike inroads in

C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 72 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

C M 175 462 [546] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the C M [595] Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances C M 175 [164] towards a Spanish woman. . . .

"Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the C M [764] old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the C M [771] shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- C M 175 756 spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

C M 114 This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

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175 nations when they are all really members of only one nation: the Toba; just as the Chinopies, Pasaynes, Guacaes, Atalalaes, Ocoles, Umuampas, Hipas, Yecoonitas and others of like race all belong to the Vilela nation, although each has its head or chief and lives in separation from the others. In this way was he able, not without a semblance of truth, to assert that the nations of the Chaco were without number; but he had no business transplanting to that region other more civilized nations from Perú, or less civilized ones from Tucumán.

"The nations which actually do exist in the Chaco are: [583] Chiriguanos, Matacos, Mataguayos, Tobas, Vilelas, Mocovíes, Abipones, Lules, Mataraes, Yapitalagas, Albayas or Guaycurúes, Guanas and Payaguaes."

Except for the Lules and Matarâes, Jolis says that these nations continue in their heathen ways.

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175 As for the remainder, Jolis' description of the Matarâes agrees
191 more or less with what Fathers Techo and Lozano tell us, but he ends with a piece of important information which is original to him and can be read on page 451 in which he tells that the Mataraes, when he retired from the country, numbered some 700 or 800 souls and lived in a little town called Matará, 36 leagues east of Santiago del Estero, bound in service to the noble Ureyola family, and he ends with these words regarding the Matarâes and Mopás: "What I know very well is that neither group speaks the Tonocoté language any longer but only the language of Cuzco, that is, of Perú."

This is a somewhat strange piece of information. Be that as it may, Father Jolis' observations regarding what Fathers Lozano and Machoni tell us, together with Abbot Hervas' judgement on the same matter, will serve to excuse me if I also reject the identification of Machoni's Lules and the Tonocotés of the Jesuit Missions.

Father Jolis was in charge of the mission station at Macapillo in 1767 among the Pasainis, who belong to the Vilela nation. Naturally, his testimony is very important.

XIII

What Abbot Hervâs Writes Regarding the Tonocotés

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175 Abbot Hervâs published his Spanish edition of the Catálogo de las Lenguas [Catalogue of Languages] in 1800. What he says in volume I

M 175 page 164 and following is so to the point that I must needs quote it in its entirety.

"The Mataguayo tongue is spoken by a quite populous nation, the most villainous in the whole Chaco, located between 21° and 24° of latitude and 315° to 317° of longitude, bordering on the territory of the Chiriguanos. The Indians of said nation are known to the Spaniards by the name of Mataguayos, a name taken from the Mataguayo tribe which used to do their agricultural [584] labor for them and also be useful in trading. The other tribes of the Mataguayo nation were known later as time went on under the names of Agoyas, Tentes, Tainoas (or Tainuzes), Palomos, Ajotas, Tañis (it is conjectured that this last tribe belongs to another nation). These names are no longer used, their place having been taken by the following: Matacos, Hueshuos, Pesatupos, Abuchetas, Imacos, etc.

M [197] All the tribes speak the same language with some small differences, as reported by Abbot Joseph Araoz, resident in Faenza, who was a missionary to the Mataguayos and compiled a grammar and a vocabulary of their language some forty years ago. However, by reason of the great length of time elapsed and owing also to his very advanced years, he no longer remembers the language which he has not attempted to keep in mind as it was useless to him under the present circumstances in which blessed Providence has placed us. The aforementioned Mr. Araoz put forth a great deal of effort together with other missionaries M [197] towards the conversion of the Mataguayos, of which 100 were added to the Chiriguano mission station called Rosario. No small number of Jesuits, both in the past century and in the present one have striven for the conversion of the Mataguayos, but with no other result than that of martyrdom, as is recounted in volumes IX, X and XXIV of Father Charlevoix's Historia del Paraguay [History of Paraguay].

V 175 "The Lule tongue, simple in its construction and different from the other American tongues, (of which I have any knowledge or whose grammatical elements I have read) is spoken in two Jesuit mission stations in the Chaco. These places, which are called Miraflores and Valbuena, belong to the diocese of Tucumán and stand on the banks of the Salado River, near the 25th degree of latitude and between 313° and 314° of longitude. Valbuena lies east of Miraflores, about twelve V 175 leagues. Father Machoni, in his Lule grammar printed in 1732 (from 114 which I have extracted the grammatical compendium which I shall publish) gives a brief account of the nations that used to speak the Lule

XV

The Mataguayos

In the year 1884 the Reverend Father Alejandro María Covrado 101 in collaboration with another missionary published in Florence certain 175 Noticias Históricas [Historical Information] originating in the Franciscan [114] College of Tarija and other missions, and in appendix L we find a very important account with reference to the Mataguayos which I shall quote: - page 535, etc. "The Mataguayos are spread over a vast region of the Chaco, especially the left bank of the Bermejo and the right bank of the Pilcomayo. On the Salta frontier they are commonly called Matacos, and Noctenes on the Tarija frontier, which is a corrupt form of Octenai, a name [592] given them by the Chiriguanos and which, in turn, appears to be a corruption of Huenneyei (1), which is what the

1. Plural of the word which means men.
(J. Pelleschi)

Mataguayos call themselves. By way of epilogue we shall give an account of what was reported, regarding the ways and customs of these savage tribes, by a missionary of this college who lived amongst them for many years:

"In their features and coloring the Mataguayos, Matacos or Noctenes, which are one and the same people, are very little different from the Chiriguanos. Their customs however are very different, and their languages absolutely so. Their villages are small, consisting usually of the several branches of only one family. They do not like to construct them in open places, preferring the dense forests and reed beds. The dwelling places are small huts made of branches or cane stuck in the ground, bent over and gathered at the ends, and covered with straw. On the inside they are similar to ovens; they are less than two meters high and their size is proportionate to the number of people to be housed in them. The ground passes for their bed, and is either quite bare or else covered with a mat of rushes or the skin of some animal. Cleanliness is utterly lacking. When the place gets to be full of fleas or other insects or filth they burn their hovels and build others not far off.

000 of small stones contained in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

764 "They bury their dead very close to the surface, being satisfied to dig a shallow pit into which they place the corpse half sitting up, with a few small branches beneath and on top of him and a little earth. Because of this it often comes about that jaguars, who can easily dig up these careless graves, get a taste for human flesh and become man-eaters. Sometimes the Indians put a little pot of water in the grave for the deceased's benefit. They also commonly burn a few things which he had used, and also his hut. The relatives of the deceased have to go to his burial place and lament over it, accompanying their cries with the pimpin. These wailings, according to the locality, are repeated for some days. They have also other
● [177] customs which they have picked up from the Tobas, to whom they are related and with whom they are friendly."

181 "It can be seen, then, that the Mataco tribe is at present a very
648 miserable one. Their way of living and their customs, furthermore, and the circumstances of our times together with the region in which they live do not point to a particularly happy future. It certainly cannot be said that the Matacos who live in Bolivian territory are declared enemies of the [607] whites or Christians, rather is it true that they sometimes work for them and say that they are friends of the whites and wish to be treated as such, in spite of the fact that this friendship seems feigned, a cloak under which they can the better steal and conceal themselves. They rustle the Christians' cattle which they exchange with the Tobas for horses, and these in turn they trade off to the Christians for other things they need, saying that they have captured these animals from their enemies."

181 "Across from the Mission of San Francisco de Pilcomayo and
787 on the banks of the river (the Pilcomayo River--Translator) are the ruins of the Mission of San Antonio, made up of Matacos brought together in 1863 and which, after having been in Bella Esperanza for two or three years were transferred to this place, where they stayed, in quite sizeable numbers, until 1879, in which year they escaped, although groups of them had fled and returned more than once before. While they remained at the Mission little or nothing could be accomplished with them in any way--they would not even consent to allowing their little children to be baptized when at the point of death. The

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

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342 against rain and wind. In these huts the Chaco Indian spends most of his time, sitting or lying on the ground or on the goat or sheep skin which forms his most important personal property. In the daytime, however, if the weather is fine, he prefers to stay outside the house engaged in various occupations or in eating or drinking, and in the summer time when no rain is falling and the temperature is high, he frequently even passes the night in the open air.

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342 Whereas primitive huts of this type are still customary among the Pilagá and other Argentine Tobas as well as among distant Mataco tribes, the Mataco and Tobas on the Bolivian side nowadays make houses of the same form as the whites, constructed of beams or balks with walls of cane and roofs of twigs and grass. Still these houses are so badly built that it is no rare thing to see a passing whirlwind sweep off the roofs and damage the walls.

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361 A Choroti or a Mataco village consists of six to twelve huts, generally arranged in a circle round an open space which serves as a field for games and as a tethering place for the small flocks of sheep and goats possessed by the Indians. In the middle of this space there is usually a shady algaroba tree under which the men of the village assemble for deliberations and where the drinking-bouts take place. In building their settlements the Indians first of all make sure of the existence of water in the neighbourhood, be it the river Pilcomayo itself or one of those insignificant pools which are found here and there in the interior of the Chaco; secondly, the place must offer the necessary pasture for their flocks; and thirdly, the Indians always settle in the vicinity of a forest where they can find plenty of the wild fruits on which they to a great extent subsist, and the trees of which offer some protection against the burning rays of the sun during the hottest hours of the day. Further, being anti-social and shy, the Indians preferably chose for their settlements a place hidden away from the main track. Seldom or never are they found close to the banks of a river: generally one has to travel one or a few miles into the interior to find their villages.

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361 The villages of the Tobas and the Ashluslay are generally larger than those of the Choroti and the Mataco because the tribes are larger, but they are arranged on the same principles. All Chaco tribes live in village communities — this is a feature which differentiates these tribes from those of the tropical virgin forests. The vast pampas regions, of course, favour the rise of larger societies, whereas in the great virgin forests the different families necessarily live scattered.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

Social classes do not exist among the Choroti, nor any distinction between rich and poor. All members of this primitive society are equally rich or equally poor and, owing to the great social sympathy which unites them, property is in practice to a great extent common to all. The relative communism or socialism existing among the lowest Chaco tribes will be touched upon later.

The social organization of the *Mataco* was originally the same as that of the Choroti, but the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia have in this as in other respects been considerably influenced by the Tobas and probably also by the Avas, and therefore at present stand socially higher than the primitive Choroti. As to the *Tobas*, in their social organization they are much superior to the Choroti, although their society is essentially founded on the same principles. Even among the Tobas the »tribe» is in its essence only a group of families united by the tie of blood-relationship. But whereas among the Choroti the chief is nothing but a respected family father without real power, the Toba chief, called *alyánek*, seems to exercise a considerable authority, at least in time of war. Although the Tobas have not been conquerors in the same sense as the Avas, they have always been a warlike race of Indians, and such peoples generally have more strongly organized societies than those who have never or only rarely tried their strength in fighting against enemies and have not grown accustomed to the order and discipline which war requires.

Social ranks and classes in the strict sense of the words do not exist among the Tobas, just as they are unknown to the Avas; but we can trace the germ of a nobility in the fact that the sons and descendants of a great cacique or war chief generally enjoy greater esteem than other members of the society. The chiefs have power to command, especially in times of war, when their orders are unfailingly obeyed. They distingush themselves from the rest of their people by having several wives and often by being richer, since of the spoils taken in war the main part is allotted to them. Formerly they also distingushed themselves externally from other men by a peculiar arrangement of the hair. According to the Catholic missionaries Dobrizhoffer and Charlevoix,[1]) all Guaycurú tribes used to pluck out the hair from the forehead to the crown of the head so that the forepart was bald. This arrangement, which had magic significance, was called *nalemrá*, and was the reason why the Tobas were called by the Spaniards

[1]) Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, II. 17. Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, I. 135.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

very qualities which the Indians appreciate in their leaders. He was valiant, cunning, and eloquent, and, being a great warrior, had provided his people with firearms which made the Tobas superior in war to all other Chaco tribes and dangerous enemies even to the whites.

The Eakachi, as is customary in the Chaco, hold their assemblies under a shady algaroba tree, generally at the time of the new moon. Besides watching the conduct of their chiefs, they have to deliberate questions of war and peace and to appoint an extraordinary chief when an attack against an enemy is planned. In addition, they act as judges or arbitrators in quarrels and fights between the men.

A social feature characteristic of all Chaco tribes is the relative matriarchy or »mother-right» prevailing among them. Descent is traced through the female, the child being supposed to belong to the mother's, and not to the father's, tribe or clan. Closely connected with this idea is the custom prevailing among most matriarchal peoples, that when a man marries, he stays with his wife's family, becoming a member of her clan. All these features are found among the Pilcomayo tribes, but particularly among the *Choroti* where »mother-right» has developed into real mother-rule. Thus in those parts of the Choroti country where they are neighbours with other tribes and intermarriage takes place, it is the rule that if the woman is of the Choroti tribe the children become members of that tribe, whereas, if a Choroti man marries a woman of another tribe, he himself and the children become members of that tribe. This was particularly noticeable in regard to the Ashluslay in the South with whom the Choroti frequently intermarry. Thus the »great chief» of the Choroti living near the fort Guachalla, the old Atamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but his mother being a Choroti woman he had himself become a Choroti.

The »mother-right» of the Choroti is not carried to such an extreme that for instance the maternal uncle or some other relative on the mother's side is regarded as the guardian of the children. Among the Choroti both parents are the guardians of the child although, as in other matters, the mother has always more to say. Nor does it imply that parentage is wholly attributed to the mother. On the contrary, the custom of couvade, as it is observed by the Choroti, shows that this maternal people is well aware of the father's great rôle in the procreation of children. The »mother-right» of the Choroti and of other Chaco tribes is in fact only a secondary phenomenon, evidently dependent on the social conditions which have developed among the tribes in this country, and which in their turn

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M 556

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

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Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

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Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

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The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S/12

M 177 577

to the extent that the Indian comes under the influence of the whites and gets «civilized», to that extent also he loses the virtue of honesty, as he loses many other virtues characteristic of him while he is in a state of nature. This again is chiefly due to the bad example given by the whites themselves. The latter steal from one another, infringe the proprietary rights of the Indians and commit other wrongs against them. The Indians, who are on this point comparable with children, naturally think they may do the same, and their very sense of justice seems to require that the same measure as is meted to them by the whites, they may themselves measure to the latter again.

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The only occasion when crimes may be committed among the Choroti are during the great drinking-feasts. When the Indians are intoxicated with algaroba beer they easily begin to quarrel with one another, and these quarrels in extreme cases may end in homicide. Now the Indians certainly regard a homicide committed in a state of inebriation rather as an accident than as a crime, for the algaroba beer is sacred and an Indian inebriated by it is looked upon as possessed by a spirit and not in the ordinary sense responsible for his acts. But the Indians are anxious to prevent such accidents and this is above all the task of the women, who never themselves drink any intoxicating drinks. On two occasions I witnessed quarrels arising during the drinking-feasts. In one case an Indian, when excessively drunk, got mad and seized his bow and arrow to shoot another Indian on account of some old controversy. Immediately the women took hold of him, deprived him of his weapons, and compelled him to leave the scene of the feast and the whole village. He in fact left for an other village in the vicinity and remained absent for several days, when he was allowed to return tohis home. The minds of the two adversaries were then perfectly tranquillized and there was no more grudge between them. In the other case also the women intervened and seized the weapons from the quarrelling men to prevent fights and manslaughter. It is usual in such cases that the offending party is sent away from the village or «exiled» for some time.

T 674

Among the more advanced *Tobas* thefts occasionally take place, but there is a question whether this phenomenon is not due to the influence of the whites, since the Tobas have on the whole been more in contact with civilization than the Choroti. In the case of smaller thefts there is no

T 685

public punishment among the Tobas; the affair is left to the private concern of the person robbed and thethief. In more serious cases the Council

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throwing spells embodied in certain material objects, small stones, cactus thorns, bones, certain insects, etc. We should say that it is the stone, thorn, etc. that causes the pains felt by the victim, but its real cause is the mysterious demon embodied in the object. This appears most clearly from the conjuration with which the medicine-man tries to remove the evil and in which the demon is directly addressed.

An epidemic is likewise caused by evil spirits, but independently of the operation of a wizard. Among these spirits there are real death-demons, who in the imagination of the Indians wander about the village carrying off one Indian after the other. The Indians are aware that these diseases, among which are small-pox, malarial fever, dysentery, etc., are imported by the whites, and they consider that their own medicine-men are powerless against them.

M 776 [177]

The animistic beliefs of the *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Choroti, but it is evident that the Mataco-Nocténes of Bolivia have been considerably influenced in their religion by the Tobas, as is the case in their general culture. The Mataco make a distinction between two kinds of lower spirits. The commonest kind of spirit, although not the most feared, are those whom the Indians call *aittáh*, generally adding the attribute *slámas* or *slahas* which means »small». These are of exactly the same nature as the majority of the spirits whom the Choroti call *mŏhsek*, although in external appearance they more resemble the *peyák* of the Tobas. Whereas in the imagination of the Choroti the *mŏhsek* have the shape of old men, the *aittáh* of the Mataco — and similarly the *peyák* of the Tobas — have the shape of young boys (*naítses*), but at the same time they are provided with wings, so that they can move as rapidly as the wind from one place to another. They are invisible, countless in number (*vúh*) and evilly-disposed (*tasukái*) towards mankind. (*Vúh aittáh tasukái*, »there are numberless evil spirits», the Mataco are in the habit of saying when speaking of the world of demons.) The ideas they entertain about them are the same as those of the Choroti. During the day these demons are not dangerous to men, for then they have retired far away to the plains and the forests. But as soon as night draws near they arrive in great numbers, although not in visible shape, dancing round the villages and huts which they like to visit with sickness and misfortune. The Indians try to keep them off by dancing, when they imitate the very movements which they fancy the demons make, by drumming, and by performing conjurations to cure patients already attacked by the demons.

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his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyím*, by his *peyák nŏtta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyím* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aittáh is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aittáh is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aittáh talák*, i.e. »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aittáh talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aittáh talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

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I have so far only spoken of the dances and other rites which take place at the preparation of the sacred drinks. During the algaroba season, festivals are held almost continuously, and these festivals are chiefly celebrated with drinking-bouts and dancing. Those of the Chaco Indians who have been in contact with the whites and seen the great festival with which, in Argentine and Boliva, they celebrate their carnival in February say that the algaroba season is their own carnival time and that they, too, have their carnival dances. The dances which among the Choroti take place at that time have partly been described before in connection with the customs practised by these Indians at courtship and marriage. In addition to the customary courtship dance *Avúshe*, the great festival, which is called *lākinene*, is celebrated with two more dances, those called *Ahlénta* and *Jóhlōki*. *Jóhlōki* is the name by which the Choroti call the Tobas, a fact that seems to indicate that the Choroti have borrowed the dance from their neighbours. The Tobas themselves call the dance *Nahotti*. It is a ring-dance; the dancing men are arranged in a circle and have their arms round each other's waists, moving round to the right or to the left to the rhythm of a chant. The *Ahlénta* again is identical with the Toba dance *Nomi*. Nevertheless, the Choroti seem to have borrowed it from their southern neighbours, the Ashluslay Indians on the lower Pilcomayo, a fact that may be inferred from the name; for just as *Jóhlōki* means »the Toba dance», so *Ahlénta* means »the Ashluslay dance» (Choroti *Ahle* = Ashluslay). I would add in this connection that the dances of the Chaco tribes are, in the main, common to all the tribes; there are certain dances which occur among different tribes under different names.

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The chants sung at the dances are rather monotonous and are composed of a series of words which apparently have no meaning; for instance in the *Jóhlōki*:

Hā-e-sa-alia,
Hiáh-hia-ália,
He-éh-hia-ália, hia-ália,
Hi-éh,
Hā-he-éh, hā-he-éh,
Hā-se-éh, hā-se-éh, hā-se-éh, etc.

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Only the younger unmarried men perform these dances, the older ones being constantly engaged in drinking algaroba beer (*atás*). Unmarried girls are allowed to be present, but as we have seen they do not as a rule

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Chapter XIX.

Ceremonial games.

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During my stay among the Choroti my attention was drawn to a curious game which was played in all villages in the month of March and evidently had some mystic meaning. The game later on turned out to be »international» in the Chaco, most tribes knowing it and playing it in somewhat different forms. The Choroti call it *syuke*, the Tobas *soka*, the Ashluslay *syúkak*, etc., names which are evidently nothing but different corruptions of the Quichua word *chunca*, ten. Similarly the playing terms in the Chaco are as it were international and of Quichua origin, a fact which seems to support the assumption that at any rate the principal ideas underlying the game have been borrowed from the Quichua Indians.

C 524

I have only studied this game among the *Choroti* and the description I shall give of it in the following pages refers merely to the variety of the game existing among these Indians.[1])

The dice consist of four pieces of wood, which are on one side convex, on the other side quite flat. The convex side is often ornamented with certain incised figures. (See fig. 10, a.)

The player takes two dice in each hand, throws them up smoothly against each other and allows them to fall on the ground. The position taken by the dice on the ground determines the value of the cast. The points are reckoned in the following way:

[1]) Nordenskiöld described this game in 1910 in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, but its magical or religious significance — which, of course gives it its particular interest — has entirely escaped him. This may in part be due to the fact that Nordenskiöld never saw the game played at the proper season, the beginning of the winters, but arranged playing-parties at an other season to learn how it was played. On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that many ceremonies, which are in their character magical or religious, have been misunderstood by ethnologists and regarded as purely profane entertainments.

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hard for existence. Now the game is supposed to have the effect of *increasing the fruit and making the Indians rich*. This is made possible by virtue of the fact that *among the Indians »there is always someone who wins»*, from whose luck all will benefit. The Indians believe that just as they can influence the course of nature, »hurry on» the growth of the crops, by beating drums, dancing, and shaking rattles, so they believe that at this critical period they can enhance the vegetative power of the useful trees and prevent starving by playing *shuke*. It seems to me probable that in this game the magical effects are produced merely by the procedure of playing — by the feverish pace at which the game goes on, and so forth — just as technique and the very rhythm play an essential part in such magical ceremonies as dancing and the beating of drums.

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That the *shuke* game, so far as its principal features are concerned, has been borrowed by the Choroti from the mountain Indians, as has been suggested even by Nordenskiöld, is a matter beyond doubt and may be inferred from the playing terms themselves which are of Quichua origin (*shuke* = *chunca*, *tauva*, and probably *kima*). On the other hand, it is certain that the Incas never had an exactly similar game, and Nordenskiöld's imagination carries him too far when he tries to show that certain objects, found in archeological excavations on the mountain area of Ecuador, are nothing but counting-boards which have been used for a game more or less identical with the *shuke*. [1]) Nordenskiöld's curious idea of connecting the said mysterious objects with the *shuke* game of the Chaco Indians entirely loses its importance in the face of the fact that, as I have shown elsewhere [2]), the ancient Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians had several »games of chance», none of which bore the slightest resemblance to the Chaco game just mentioned. The map published by the same ethnographer, showing the supposed distribution of »games of chance» in South America, was therefore decidedly prematurely drawn. [3]) The particular character of the Chaco game has obviously, in

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[1]) See his article »Spieltische aus Peru und Ecuador», in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Heft 2 u. 3, 1918, p. 169.

[2]) See my *Ceremonial Games of the South American Indians* (*Societas Scientiarum Fennica. Commentationes humanarum litterarum*, Helsingfors 1930).

[3]) Whereas Nordenskiöld erroneously assigns the neighbourhood of Quito in Ecuador as a region where a game like the *shuke* has been practised, he knows nothing of the games of chance I have myself discovered later in that country: the *huairu* game practised in the southern and eastern mountain regions, the *huairitu* and *singu* in vogue among the forest Indians on the rivers Bobonaza and Pastaza.

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many details, been determined by local conditions, and therefore must differ from the games customary among the ancient mountain Indians. Thus all ceremonial dice games in the Inca empire seem to have been connected with the *cult of the dead*, an idea which is wholly foreign to the Chaco Indians. Further, the Incas probably knew only of *portable* playing-boards, whereas the Chaco Indians always draw the counting-board on the ground. Moreover, the latter Indians use arrows as markers, the place where the player is »drowned«, is called »river«, and so forth.

The Chaco Indians, in all probability, have only borrowed the leading ideas underlying the game, together with the terminology, from their neighbours in the west, and to a certain extent invented a new game, giving these borrownings an application of their own. When the primitive Indians from the interior of the country came in contact with the comparatively civilized peoples in the west, they learned to know certain games which were said to have the marvellous effect of making the fields fruitful and filling the granaries of the Indians. We may assume that it was precisely this *practical* importance of the game that impressed the mind of the primitive Indians and induced them to invent a game similar to that customary among the Incas and to ascribe to it a similar magical efficacy. But the *shuka* was not the only game which originated in this way under the influence of the Inca civilization. Various other games, both games of chance and games of skill, seem to be in vogue in the Chaco, even among tribes so distant as the Lenguas of Paraguay, but of their possible ceremonial character nothing is known. If we may trust the ethnologists who have hitherto related the customs of the Chaco tribes, the *shuka* game is the only one to which a magical significance is ascribed.

Nor does he know the *sake* game practised by the Quichua Indians all over the Bolivian mountain area. The value of »culture traits« so arbitrarily drawn seems to me most doubtful.

[pp. 206-230 inclusive not processed for the File.]

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I had not planned to investigate. I hoped that the notes I took then would be useful for a more systematic and complete study of the Matako in the future. I should never have thought of publishing these tales and documents had I not good reason to believe that there is little chance for me to return to the Chaco.[1] Even if destiny should take me again to that country, I do not know whether the same material would be available. The disappearance of the old native cultures in South America is rapid, especially among tribes of a low cultural level.

The Matako, more than any other Chaco tribe, have been exposed to the degrading influence of white colonists, but there still remain some villages, especially on the upper Pilcomayo and on the middle course of the Bermejo, where the natives live according to ancient standards. Those who had their villages along the »linea», the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación, were the most miserable wretches that I saw in South America. Generous English missionaries try with very precarious means to rescue the Indians by extending to them the protection of the Mission stations and by helping during the critical period of transition from their native culture toward a new form of life. The mission work among the Matako has proved most successful. The Indians have shown extraordinary aptitude and under the direction of the English missionaries they display remarkable talents in crafts that they ignored completely a few years ago. Their zest for instruction has always been deep and their enthusiasm must sometimes be moderated. The rapidity and ease with which the Matako adapt themselves to our modern civilization remains one of the most puzzling problems that I met with in South America. Seen in their native environment the Matako seem to be the most irreducible tribe of the Chaco. Even their physical aspect carries an impression of

[1] I was unable to check many of the ethnological data given in the notes. To make them scientifically available I have reproduced the information in the very terms of the Indians.

115 old—the oldest Indian in the mission I believe. Esteemed by everyone, he had developed a consciousness of his respectability that was sometimes a bit comic. He spoke with poise, choosing elegant and sophisticated words the meanings of which he never really understood. His language was a slight parody on the affected speech of certain colonists. In his youth he had lived with his tribe which was still independent of and untouched by European civilization, but later in life, like many intelligent Indians, he deemed it useful and convenient to join the white settlers for a while. He was among the first natives to help the missionaries and became one of the first and best Christians of the Missions. Martin's long contact with mestizo settlers and later with missionaries made of him an informant of lesser value than Pedro. His tales were generally twisted so that they would fit to the new type of living which had developed in Martin's community. In working with me he tried to rationalize the old lore of his tribe as if I were a colonist with no experience in Indian ways. However, his contribution is valuable because he was an old man extremely well informed in primitive customs of his tribe.

• 117 538 Martin's tales are not all Indian, although I expressed to him several times my desire to have only native lore. He told me many tales of distinctly European origin. He always insisted that they were known by other Indians and consequently were genuine. As some of these European tales had been told my be Pedro who also denied their foreign source, one may consider them as having been incorporated into the modern folklore of the Indians. Often Indian elements as well as Indian characters in such tales (for instance, the Rainbow playing the part of an Ogre) point out that European motifs have been worked up by the native story tellers and readjusted to the environment. For that reason I feel that tales of recent introduction should not be neglected. They may give precious hints as to the diffusion of European stories among the natives of America, and indicate the way they have been integrated into native culture. The intro-

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duction of these tales to the Matako is quite recent since the Indians have been in regular touch with white settlers for only thirty or forty years.

The most important character in the Matako tales is familiar to all students of North American ethnology — he is the Trickster. His Matako name is *Takxwax*, *Tokxwax* or *Tawkxwax*, according to the region. The last form which I have adopted is used at Algarrobal, near Embarcación. My two informants agreed that *Tawkxwax* was a »loco» a fool and by this word they meant a practical joker, a person who likes to play harmful tricks on people. The bad people in the region were always referred to as »locos». The adventures of *Tawkxwax* strongly suggest those of the famous tricksters of North American ethnology. The resemblance is even more accentuated in the tales of other tribes. In the mythology of the Toba Pilagá the tricks or the adventures are attributed to the fox who is the South American equivalent of the Coyote. The perfect parallels between the stories concerning *Tawkxwax* and those in which the fox is the hero are so numerous and striking that I often tried to make the Matako confess that *Tawkxwax* was the fox of the other tribes. They always denied my identification and insisted that *Tawkxwax* was a man.

Everyone familiar with North American folklore will recognize in these tales many similarities between the Chaco tales and those which constitute the rich oral literature of North American tribes. I am too little acquainted with North American ethnology to draw parallels but no doubt they are numerous. The essential part played by the Trickster in mythology is a feature which cannot be neglected. Parallels between North American and South American Indian tales will be more obvious when I am able to issue the mythology of the Toba Pilagá that I had the opportunity to study more systematically and thoroughly than the Matako. The Matako mythology is only a short introduction to a more rich and complete material.

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hoppers. *Tawkxwax* got the idea he would fasten the trees to the ground so that they could not run away. So the trees were fixed to the ground and thus they lost their power to move, the power which had been so useful to men before.

25. The Iguana and Tawkxwax (Pedro)

Formerly the tail of the iguana was very long. *Tawkxwax* set out to catch him but at first he could only succeed in stepping on his tail. At last he caught him but the iguana escaped, leaving its tail in his fingers.

26. Tawkxwax and the Menstruating Men (Pedro)

The earth was under water. Rain made beer and invited everybody to the feast. All the guests came dressed in their most beautiful clothes. The mosquitoes had red mantles (ponchos) but they would not tell how they had stained them because they feared that the rain would be angry with them. They had dyed their mantles with human blood. Although *Tawkxwax* was a wealthy man and had great riches and wonderful garments under the ground, he appeared at the feast in old rags. Offended the rain insulted *Tawkxwax* who went home to change his clothes. When he returned to the feast he had on a poncho, a hat with a broad brim, a handkerchief and splendid boots. The rain became jealous and thought that *Tawkxwax* was too smart. He tried to strike him with lightning. *Tawkxwax* who could not understand why the rain was acting so strangely, cut a branch, sharpened it and put it into the barrel of a Remington gun. Taking careful aim with this weapon he ran after the rain. The rain knowing of the wickedness of *Tawkxwax* asked himself, »Where can I go?» He climbed a tree and from it climbed to the sky. Thus chased into the sky, the rain has not come back because he is still afraid of *Tawkxwax*.

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H. TALES OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN OR WITH PREDOMINANT EUROPEAN ELEMENTS

117. The Magic Flight (Pedro)

A Matako had a very pretty daugther who was loved by a man. The girl's father said, »I will give you my daughter if by noon you dig a well deep enough for me to get water from.» At noon the girl took her lover some food and found that he had only dug a hole six feet deep. The girl said, »I love you, I will help you and then we can marry.» She blew and the earth cracked open and the man drew water out of the well. The girl returned to her father and he asked, »Has he drawn water from the well?» »Yes.» »You may marry him, he is a good worker.»

The girl's father then ordered the man to build a corral and to have it finished by noon. At the time the woman went to give him his food she saw that he had only put up poles for a distance of 300 feet. She said, »I love you, I will help you so you can finish your work quickly.» She blew and her breath felled trees and broke off branches which went over and stuck themselves upright in the ground. The fence was completed right away. The father wanted to give him another task. The woman said to her husband, »I cannot help you, we must flee otherwise my father will kill you.» Before they left the girl made a heap of saliva and left it in her hut. During the night the father, who was distrustful, kept calling his daughter to see if she was in her hut. The saliva answered him each-time he called but as the night wore on the voice became weak and in the morning the words could hardly be heard for the saliva had dried up. The father was aware of the trick his daugther had played on him and he started to pursue her. When the daughter heard her father following them she changed her husband into a *yuckan*[1] and herself into a log lying across the road. The couple fled farther and as the father drew

[1] Bombaceae, see note 1 p. 18.

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near again the girl threw her comb and it became a forest. In order to escape her angry father who followed her everywhere she changed herself first into a *tartago* (Ricinus) and then into a hawk (*carancho*). At last she changed herself into a river so wide that her father could not cross over to the other side.

[Another version of this tale tells how the girl became pregnant and gave birth the same day. When the father opened the door of his daugther's hut he found in it a child who was his grandson.]

118. Opa (Pedro)

Opa had a brother who forced him to gather the corn in his field. There were many stalks of corn and the work was to be finished before midnight. Opa did his best but he knew that he could never finish the work in time. The ants came to help him and they gathered all the corn. When the brother came to see how the work was progressing he found that the work had been completed.

The same brother ordered Opa to drink all the water in a certain pool Opa drank as much as he could but the pool was not dry. He heard the voice of *Katęla*, mother-in-law of the water. She said, »You could never drink all that water, but I will help you.« She drank and the pool dried up at once. The brother of Opa was very pleased.

Opa caught many fish with a hook. His brother was also lucky. They set out again and the brother said to Opa, »We shall eat our fish, but let us begin with yours.« Opa agreed. His brother ate all the fish but when Opa wanted to have his brother's fish he was refused. Opa was left with nothing to eat. He went back to the pool and fished again. He caught even more fish than he had the first time. His brother came and asked him for some fish as he was very hungry. Opa would not give him any because his brother was stingy and bad.

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119. The Boy Who Killed the Rainbow (Pedro)

A boy was ordered to look after his grandmother's sheep. One day a man who was passing by offered to trade him a dog for a sheep. At first the boy was not willing for he was afraid his grandmother would beat him, but the man assured him the dog would fight for him because instead of nails in his paws there were knives. The boy went home, leaving the dog outside after having ordered him to run to his side if he called to him. He went inside the house and his grandmother began to beat him. He called his dog and the dog rushed into the house with such force that the door was flung against the woman and she fell down. As she was getting up the old woman said she believed he had exchanged a sheep for the dog and she caught the dog and tied him up. Then the old woman ordered the boy to climb a tree and when he was up the tree she let her husband's wild pigs loose. When the wild pigs began to root up the tree the boy called to his dog, who cut his leash and killed the wild pigs. The old woman, angry at the death of her husband's wild pigs, sent the boy to his sister who was married to a rainbow. Before arriving at his sisters the boy hold his dog to come as soon as he called. He arrived at the womans' house and told her that his grandmother had beaten him for having given a sheep to a hungry traveler. He was careful not to tell her that he had exchanged the sheep for a dog. He asked her for a sheep to replace the one he had given away. She told him that he had done wrong by coming to her for her husband, the rainbow, would eat him when he returned. She advised him to run away before the return of her husband, but he did not follow her advice. When her husband was coming home she hid the boy behind same hides. The rainbow smelled the odor of man and asked his wife who was there. She said there was nobody there and that he was just smelling *charqui*.[1] Not satisfied with her answer the

[1] Dry meat.

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177 X539 X773 rainbow looked everywhere, found nothing and went to sleep. The boy left his hiding place, sharpened his knife and cut the rainbow's throat, but the rainbow awoke and swallowed the boy just after he had called his dog. The dog rushed in and grabbing the rainbow by the back tore his belly open. The boy got out and cut the body of the rainbow into pieces and threw them away. The woman said that since he had killed her husband, she was going to marry him and that she would see if he would give her human dry meat. The boy told her that he was not as bad as the rainbow and that he would kill many animals.

120. The Boy Who Killed the Rainbow (second version) (Martin)

Once there was an old woman who owned many sheep. She had no one to take care of her flocks and she wanted a herder. One day in going to get some wood she discovered a child in a lonely place. She took him in and fed him. She did not know who the child belonged to but she was satisfied because it was a boy. She thought, »He will grow up and be my servant.» The child grew up and began to tend herd. One day he met two devils and he struck a bargain with them. They gave him two dogs in exchange for some sheep. The boy knew the sheep were not his, but the devils insisted so much that he was obliged to agree. He went back to his house and the old woman counted the sheep. She saw that some where missing. She said, »Where are the missing sheep?» He answered, »I met two men and I was so afraid they might kill me I traded some sheep for two dogs.» The boy was left with the dogs. The following day the old woman made herself sick and said to the child, »Go and get me some herbs, don't take the dogs with you but leave them here.» The dogs were kept in the house tied with thick chains. They were lying very quietly together paying attention to each noise. The boy set out and found a tree with some flowers. These flowers were the herbs the old

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woman wanted. The herbs were defended by some wild boars that arrived with thunder and wind. The child seeing them shouted. The dogs heard him and broke their chains, which fell off, and ran to help their master. They charged the wild boars, routed and killed them. The child picked the flowers and took them to his mother.

The following day he set out on a journey with the two dogs. At sunset he found a house and stayed there. The people there told him to avoid taking a certain road where there was a man who ate people. The child said, »I will kill that man.» He arrived where the man was. This man was the *lewo* (rainbow). There the boy met his sister. »How are you, my sister?» She replied, »I am a prisoner of that man. Why did you come here? That man will eat you.» »No, I will kill him first.» He went out of the house. The man reached him. He had thunder and lightning with him and rain. The child tied a pair of scissors to the neck of each dog. The monster swallowed the dogs and they passed from one side to the other in his stomach, badly tearing his internal organs. The monster was like a whale and he tried to drown them by spewing water everywhere, but the dogs shook the water off.

121. The Children and the Jaguar (Martin)

Once there were a man and a woman who lived in a village. They were upset by their two children, a boy and a girl, because they never allowed them to make any pots. The man took them to the forest. He found there a honey comb in a tree. He dug it out. When he got the honey out of the tree he said to the children, »Stay here and enjoy this honey, I will go and get some more. As soon as I find it I will call you.» The children remained there and ate the honey. At sunset the boy said, »Our father is certainly lost, that is why he has not called us.» They began to shout and cry and look for him, but their father did not answer for he had

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gone home. Late in the evening they discovered a stone house in the middle of a glade. On the top of the house was a chair and leading up to the chair were some stairs. The children sat on top of the house and waited. About eight o'clock they heard the roaring of jaguars. The girl said to her brother, »What is it?» The boy answered, »Do not be afraid, you hear the drum of our father, tomorrow we will go home.»

When the jaguar arrived, the girl cried. The boy threw at it with his sling and almost killed the jaguar. The jaguar said »My children, don't be afraid, I have come to save you.» They went down and dressed the jaguar's wound, which was full of worms. The jaguar recovered. The following day the jaguar bought them a cow which they butchered. As they were eating the meat another jaguar happened to pass by. He said to the first jaguar, »Why are you keeping these children, you feed them although you know their parents hate us.» »They are my children, said the jaguar, they came to see me. If you are intending to slaughter them, you must start with me.» The jaguars fought over the children. The boy helped his friend and together they killed the other jaguar. The jaguar took the children with him so that they might learn something about the world. The children were already grown up. They set out for a village 50 miles away. Halfway there they found a huge serpent blocking the road. The people they met on their way said to them, »Don't go there the serpent will eat you.» But the jaguar and the children answered, »We shall go and if we meet the serpent, well, we shall kill it.» The people treated the three voyagers with kindness. Before reaching the serpent there was a house where they lodged. The woman, who owned the house, told them, »The serpent will eat you.» The boy replied, »If you see crows lying there you will know we are dead, but if you don't see them it will be a sign that we are on the other side.»

They found the serpent sleeping. The jaguar seized it by the neck and the boy cut it into pieces with a cutlass. They

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butchered the serpent. They were already in the new country. They arrived at a little house. The owner said, »How could you come, the serpent kills everybody?» Well, we have killed the serpent.» The man notified the village, »A man has finished the serpent.» The people would not believe it. A chief gathered the people and said, »Let us go and see what the trouble is.» The chief went away with his party. He found the dead serpent. He cut off its tail and its head but the child had cut out its tongue long before and had kept it.

The chief went back and presented the head and tail to the great chief saying, »I have killed the serpent.» The great chief called the boy and asked him if it was true that he had slaughtered the serpent. The boy said, »It is true, here you have the tongue.» The chief was very angry having the great chief treat him as a liar. The chief lay in ambush for the boy. He was going to kill him. Early in the morning he went to catch him. The boy had only his knife but with it he killed all his enemies. He remained in the village and the jaguar came back.

122. The Boy Who Killed the Wicked Men (Martin)

There was an old man who had a daughter. The daughter had lost her husband and she remained a widow with two children. (XIX). The old man, who was one-eyed, told the children that they should not eat fish. They had always obeyed him. They set out and found a pool full of fish and one of the children said, »Even though our grandfather forbids us to eat fish because he is one-eyed, we will eat some.» When they returned to their home that evening they said, »Mother, we ate fish today.» The old man heard them and said, »So you have eaten fish today?» He got up and chased them with a cudgel to beat them for having disobeyed him. The boys went to a village where there were houses. The owners were giants who blocked the way and ate people.

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The boy[1] stayed there and the giants allowed him to rest. At sunset the giants fell asleep. The boy was awake and thinking how he could escape. While the people were asleep he got out and went on his journey. He arrived at the world's end, at the seashore. Before he arrived there he met a widow. The widow received him very kindly and gave him food. She told him how he could cross the sea. He arrived at the sea and an alligator came near. He said, »I want to go to the other side.» The animal said, »Get on me.» He got on the alligator and he landed on the other side. There he found a village with very nice people. He remained with them. The chief of the people liked the boy very much. He stayed there one year. Sometimes the village would disappear and sometimed it would come back. One day the boy said to the chief, »Father, I want to go back.» The man said, »All right, I shall give you a stick which will be useful to you on many occasions.» He gave him the stick and the boy returned, crossing the sea on the back of the alligator. He set out and arrived at the place of the widow. He said to her, »I will kill the bad people who killed your husbands.» The widow was greatly pleased and she gave him much food so that he could go on with his journey. He arrived where the wicked men were. They said, »Here is the man who escaped us, we shall eat him.» The boy said, »All right, here I am, do what you will with me.» The bad men came and he knocked them down with his stick.

There was peace in the world and everybody was happy for he had killed the wicked people. The boy set out and arrived in his country. His mother was very happy and he killed his grandfather who had made him leave home.

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[1] The informant forgot about the second son and in the continuation of his story speaks of one only.

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123. The Child and the Friendly Animals

There were three fishermen and their mother, who was a very old woman. They fisherman set out on a journey. The first day they held a meeting and they decided that they would eat first the provisions of their younger brother and later the food of the two others. They did as they planned. When they had finished they had not done as they, but each of the elder brothers ate his provisions without giving a bit to their younger brother. The poor boy was obliged to live on the little that was left. On their way they met some ants who were trying to eat a piece of bread. The elder brothers said to the younger one, »Eat that piece of bread.» The boy said, »Poor animals they are not like us, they have no hands. I will crumble this piece of bread so that they can eat.» He crumbled it and the ants ate. Farther on they met a falcon with a pigeon. The brothers said, »Take that pigeon from the falcon.» But the boy replied, »I will cut up this pigeon in order that the falcon can eat it more easily, the poor bird has no knife.» He gave the falcon the meat chopped up in small pieces. The falcon said, »Thank you, if you need me, I will help you.» Still farther on they met a jaguar and a puma and a prairie wolf (*aguara*). They had killed a cow and they were trying to quarter it. The brothers said, »If you are hungry you can take meat from this cow that the animals have slain.» The boy said, »They have no knife. I will help them quarter the cow. Each shall receive his share.» He did as he had said. The tiger said, »Son, if ever you get into any trouble and cannot get out of it, call us, we will be there.»

In the evening they arrived at the house of a man. This man had large fields sown with rice. He spoke to the brothers and asked them if they could help him harvest his crop for a distance of four miles. The two elder brothers pointed to the younger one and said, »He knows how to do it in a moment.» The boy did not know what to do. The owner

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of the field was a devil. He said to the child, »I will wait until you succeed,» and he went to his house to take a nap. The boy set out and on his way met an old woman. She spoke to him. »Why are you so sad? Why are you crying?» »It is the fault of my brothers who abuse and harm me every day.» The old woman said, »Don't you remember the animals you helped? They are waiting for you.» The boy realised that it was true. He went away and met a big ant. The ant said, »If you have some bread, put a piece at each corner.» He did so. In the night a party of ants gathered around the field and harvested it. At dawn the rice was stored up and you could see piles of it very clean without straw. They boy removed the rice. The devil was satisfied. That same day he went to the brothers and said, »Which of you can rescue my daughter who is in the power of another devil?» The brothers pointed to their younger brother. »He can do that.» The younger one set out in search of the woman. Before he arrived he met the puma, jaguar, and the prairie wolf (*aguara*) and also the falcon and the ants. The tiger gave him some good advice. The falcon spoke, »You change into a falcon.» The boy changed himself into a falcon. He found the stolen woman sitting with her husband in the lobby of house. The man was so bad that he would kill everything that came near his house. The man stood up and seized his bow and arrow to kill the falcon, but the girl said, »Don't kill him, he is tame, I will give him some food.» The man did not kill him. The bird went out. He held another meeting with his friends, the animals. »How can I kill this man? The father of the girl told me that he cannot be slain even if he is cut into pieces.» The jaguar said, »You must find out how many lives this giant has and in what way he can be put to death. Go and ask the girl. She will ask the man and when the girl finds out you will certainly hear about it.» The boy again changed himself into a falcon and went to see the girl. He chose a moment when she was alone and said. »I am a man sent by your

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father. I wish to have you ask that man how he is going to die, how he can be killed.» It was time for dinner. They were eating. Before they had finished the girl spoke, »Why don't you die when they kill you? If you really love me you will tell me where your life is and what your death is.» The devil said, »Why should I not love you, I love you very much. At last he said, »I have my life in a lagoon. My first life is a bull, in the bull is a cactus, in the cactus is a pigeon, in the pigeon an egg and in the egg my life. That is the last one. The man who kills these three animals and brings the egg and strikes me on the forehead will end my lives.» They finished their meal at the siesta time. The falcon went out again. The boy returned to his fellow animals and told them what he had heard. They discussed the matter and went to see where the bull was. They found him sleeping under an algarroba tree. The jaguar and the puma hunted the bull and killed it. They cut it and opened its stomach. The cactus jumped out and ran to a pool. They caught it and cut off its head. They opened it. The pigeon flew out, but before it reached the lagoon the falcon captured it and brought it back. They opened its stomach and took an egg out. The boy set out this time in the guise of a boy. When he arrived at the devil's house the devil was lying. He struck him on the head with the egg and his life ended. They took the woman to give her back to her father. He was very pleased to see her again. The devil said to the young man, »If you wish you may marry my daughter.» But the boy thought, »If I marry the daughter of this devl, perhaps he will kill me, I had better go». He said to the devil, »My brothers can get water out of this stone.» The devil ordered them to get water out of the stone. They could not and the devil killed them and ate them. The boy went back to his mother.

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Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Río Pilcomayo and the Río Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *cawguaté* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *alpis* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *owtshe;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-photo. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the *satnáy* and *sitóy*, and consequently the girls from the *satnáy* preferred to marry men of the *sitóy* band, and girls of the *sitóy* men of the *satnáy* band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [944] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [575] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [947] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *enatsha tahuyéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

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been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

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terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

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most that can be said is that the mania found a suitable climate for continuation in that atmosphere of disintegration and pessimism. It must be remembered that similar crises have been observed from the very beginning of the missionary era. It may well be, therefore, that suicide was an institutionalized form of protest under the conditions of the earlier culture undertaken for some concrete reason by one individual who could not otherwise effectively punish members of the in-group, and followed by others whose desires were kindled by the first example.

Suicides seem to have occurred with relative frequency among the Kaingang who were gathered on a reservation in the State of Sao Paulo. Since in certain cases they seem to have been caused by analogous situations to those found among the Matako, the following passage by Maniser may be of interest: "Suicides caused by family quarrels are very common. I know of several cases: Cagndiri attempted to hang herself because of some affair with her husband's brother; for that reason she was expelled from home. Vangrikuiix tried to hang herself when her husband planned to abandon her. Nazo's wife hanged herself to death because of an affair with her husband's brother, quite a young man. Old Karege's son killed himself by hanging after a quarrel with his wife who had refused to eat palmito which he had brought back from the forest. There were two other cases of suicide during the two years the Kaingang were under supervision."[1]

The cases of suicide among South American natives listed by Wiese, in his book "Selbstmord und Todesfurcht bei den Naturvölkern" (Zutphen, 1933) are based on vague references in the travel literature of the last century and as a rule are valueless for science.

[1] Les Kaingangs, 23th International Congress of Americanists, New York, 1928, p. 760-761.

Mataco SI 7
Toba SI 12

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Matacos or Noctenes

This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

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A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

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These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

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Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

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1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make <u>chicha</u> because they hardly plant maize.

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They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./

771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
167 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
179 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
131 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They
199 occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
199 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Chorotí SF6
Mataco SF7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 191 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 171 176 [156] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

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582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality [591] —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *nikyi*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Río Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 621 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [595] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say,
[182] but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognized is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

[587] [589] Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. [682] Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

762 the victim awaits death. It is said that some men take poison to blackmail a woman into complying with their wishes.

It has been noticed time and again that only young people eat sachasandia as a rule. Among the cases cited above there is only one of an elderly woman who attempted to take her life. In this connection, the question arises of whether suicides are more common among women than among men. No data on this point have been gathered, but it is the impression of the missionaries that suicide is equally common among men and women with perhaps a slight majority among
762 women. The first problem raised by the frequency of these suicides is
178 whether the suicides are caused by new conditions of life —by culture clash and lack, of adjustment to a new world— or whether they were equally frequent formerly when the native culture still functioned? Since no Matako group now lives in its earlier surroundings, the truth of the matter will be difficult to learn. If the problem is presented to
[797] the missionaries who are largely responsible for the disappearance of the Indian culture, they always insist that suicides were one of the worst manifestations of the culture before the Indians were saved.
762 They point out, moreover, that the number of suicides was particular-
535 ly high at the time when the missionaries began their work in the re-
178 gion, and they establish a close relation between suicide and dancing. One of the missionaries wrote to me: "In the old days when the Indians were still dancing, there used to be as many as a dozen attempted suicides in one day, resulting in my being up most of the night going from one to another. They were so many and so frequent, however, and it happened so long ago that I can remember none in detail". This evidence is confirmed by other missionaries who recall that the worst epidemics always occured in connection with the night dances which have a decidedly sexual character. At such times young married
[837] men who took part in the entertainments slept with girls, thus arousing the jealousy of their wives and the anger of their mothers-in law. If as a result one or two people committed suicide, others would follow their example.

The link established between night dances and suicide was the main reason for the strict tabu against dancing which is now enforced in every mission. Indians have been made so aware of the evil of dancing that even little girls have been kept from their normal and charming jumping about. Missionaries, however, are not responsible for this measuré; it has been self-imposed by the Indians.

762 No cases of suicide are known among other tribes who live in the
171 same region and under similar conditions. At any rate, I have never

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her
262 hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chumupi-Vilelas.

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

000 of small stones contained in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

"They bury their dead very close to the surface, being satis-
764 fied to dig a shallow pit into which they place the corpse half sitting up, with a few small branches beneath and on top of him and a little earth. Because of this it often comes about that jaguars, who can easily dig up these careless graves, get a taste for human flesh and become man-eaters. Sometimes the Indians put a little pot of water in the grave for the deceased's benefit. They also commonly burn a few things which he had used, and also his hut. The relatives of the deceased have to go to his burial place and lament over it, accompanying their cries with the pimpin. These wailings, according to the locality, are repeated for some days. They have also other
[177] customs which they have picked up from the Tobas, to whom they are related and with whom they are friendly."

"It can be seen, then, that the Mataco tribe is at present a very
● 181 miserable one. Their way of living and their customs, furthermore,
648 and the circumstances of our times together with the region in which they live do not point to a particularly happy future. It certainly cannot be said that the Matacos who live in Bolivian territory are declared enemies of the [607] whites or Christians, rather is it true that they sometimes work for them and say that they are friends of the whites and wish to be treated as such, in spite of the fact that this friendship seems feigned, a cloak under which they can the better steal and conceal themselves. They rustle the Christians' cattle which they exchange with the Tobas for horses, and these in turn they trade off to the Christians for other things they need, saying that they have captured these animals from their enemies."

"Across from the Mission of San Francisco de Pilcomayo and
181 on the banks of the river (the Pilcomayo River--Translator) are the
787 ruins of the Mission of San Antonio, made up of Matacos brought together in 1863 and which, after having been in Bella Esperanza for two or three years were transferred to this place, where they stayed, in quite sizeable numbers, until 1879, in which year they escaped, although groups of them had fled and returned more than once before. While they remained at the Mission little or nothing could be accomplished with them in any way—they would not even consent to allowing their little children to be baptized when at the point of death. The

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797 final pretext which they gave for escaping was that their white neighbours wanted to kill them, and it seems that this was actually the case; and the Matacos had good reason to fear some reprisal for they continued to have an understanding with the Tobas in whose company they indulged in periodic stealing. They wished, or at least some of them did, to return a short while later, but the Missionary Fathers did not dare to readmit them as they could clearly see that at that time they could not hope to accomplish anything with such a depraved, shiftless and untrustworthy people, and also because they deemed it prudent to quell the slanderous murmurings of the whites who kept saying that the missionaries were informers for the Indians and aided them in their raids."

"And nevertheless it is a fact that the Tobas and also the Matacos stole a hundred times less when they were with the missionaries than before they came to them and after they left. I merely refer to these matters in order to point out the difficulties, which still exist, of converting and civilizing the Matacos; it may be that later on the circumstances will change, and the difficulties will disappear or lessen." [608]

XVIII

Observations on the Preceding Chapter

According to Father Cardús the Matacos are the Mataguayos Notenes [sic], Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalaes, Chunupies, etc. One must not confuse these Chunupies with the Chulupies or Vilelas.

Here we see how the Noctenes can also be Notenes; and it would be interesting to find out what the dialect of the Malbalaes and Chunupies is like.

I have not thought it to be my business to abridge the reports of the Missionary Fathers because they are full of interesting facts and I am always wary of the personal element when the subject being treated is that of Indian nations around which there plays a certain discord among authors. Were I able to add anything, regarding these Indians, from personal observation, that would be another matter; but my field is limited to languages and I really needed trustworthy background material such as this in order to set the stage for what will later be said regarding the Mataco language and its co-dialects.

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I was able to come upon among the Matacos was this attempt at a poetic song, sung goodness only knows how, by the squaws. However, in spite of its failings it does reveal the use of rime:

[531]

Bonica nambonica
Se-le-ctie-no:
Bonica, bonica;
Nambonica, nambonica.

which means: I like, I do not like you to embrace me:
I like, I like, I do not like, I do not like.

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They have no dances; those violent gallopings about in a circle holding hands can hardly be called dancing. They are chaste, however, when they do dance, and if men and women happen to be at a dance together each sex forms its own separate circle, one within the other, but without touching.

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In a word, everything pertaining to the imagination, everything coming under the heading of religion, poetry or dance, can be said to be completely lacking among these savages.

[217] Chapter XIII

Social Matters (continued)

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But if they have no imagination are they not also heartless and insensitive? It has repeatedly been said and written that the bonds of kinship are not at all close and easily severed among the Indians; and this "fact" has apparently been picked up not from observation but by analogy based on the absence of the family and the existence of concubinage.

I am afraid that this is going too far. We are accustomed to and molded by our Christian tradition, which, by the way, is an exception to the immense majority of other cultural traditions, an exception which is paid for in part by pretense and infidelity, and the barefaced immorality which is prostitution.

It seems to us that if a woman is not joined to a man by all the sacraments of the church, and if she is not his only wife, then there results a shrivelling in all the finer feelings.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 7

In disposition the three tribes show great differences. The *Choroti* are pleasant and cheerful, and display to a high degree that humorous spirit which is often characteristic of the Indian even when he looks serious. They are lazy and carefree and love amusement, feasting, dancing, and games above everything. When the Choroti Indian has plenty of food and algaroba beer for the moment, he makes merry and eats and drinks as much as he can, but has no thought for the morrow and does not store provisions like the more advanced Chaco tribes. This particularly holds true of the men; the women, who in general are more industrious, show more forethought in this respect, collecting wild fruits in great quantities when they are in season, and keeping the seed-corn till the following sowing. But on the whole poverty is an outstanding feature of the material culture of the Choroti, and this is no doubt due to a great extent to their own character.

The Choroti are — at least nowadays — a peaceful people, and in the insignificant wars they have sometimes waged with the Mataco on the other side of the river, they have manifested very little organization or discipline. As I was told by settlers on the Pilcomayo, the Choroti were formerly more warlike, and like other Chaco tribes, they were even in the habit of scalping those enemies whom they killed during their raids.

The *Mataco*, although anthropologically closely related to the Choroti, differ from them considerably in character. The Mataco Indian is serious, taciturn, and gloomy, and in consequence more addicted to religion and superstition than his brother the Choroti Indian. At least nowadays, when the Indians are strongly influenced by European civilization, the Mataco Indian will not make a reliable servant and companion. Cleanliness is not a particular characteristic of the Choroti, but the Mataco are probably the dirtiest of all Chaco tribes. This too may in part be a consequence of their contact with the whites. On the other hand, the Mataco are more industrious and energetic than the Choroti, and accordingly, in their wars, have proved more valiant and capable of more organization than their primitive neighbours. In these respects the Mataco, at any rate the Bolivian tribes, resemble their neighbours the Tobas more than the Choroti.

As to the *Tobas*, their moral qualities and disposition have been described with much unanimity by many travellers. Nearly all have characterized them as bad, ferocious, treacherous, thievish, etc., qualities which they have especially displayed towards the whites. Typical on

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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●181 In Chaco, both the primitive methods of constructing the houses and the peculiar character of the social life must to a great deal be explained by the fact that the Chaco Indians are nomads, unable to remain long in any one place and driven by resistless forces from one part of the country to another. Both their enemies, partly other Indian tribes, partly men of an altogether different race, and nature itself have always compelled them to live a nomadic life. It is a well known fact that the interior of the Chaco has for many centuries been a place of refuge for savage tribes driven to these inhospitable regions against their own will, under the pressure of superior forces. Still more do natural conditions force the Indians to wander: vast inundations at certain seasons, complete lack of water at others, and a variety of considerations arising from the necessity of obtaining a livelihood. When pasture or game is getting scarce in one place, the Indans change their abode and move to another place where it is easier to feed their flocks and to eke out their store of food by hunting. Agriculture, although practised to a very limited extent, may also at times compel the Chaco Indians to seek new dwelling-places. But — as Mr. Grubb rightly observes with special reference to the Lenguas of Paraguay — the Chaco Indian is often driven to forsake home and friends merely by his restless spirit, »the result of generations of hard and peculiar circumstances fixing a habit upon him which becomes second nature». The mere desire to wander and to get a change, or perhaps to see relatives and friends living in another part of the country, may induce an Indian to abandon his house and to move away with his wife and children and his whole property. Superstition works in the same direction. When a death occurs in a house, that house is as a general rule destroyed and burnt, and if an epidemic causes several deaths within a short time, the whole village is destroyed and thereafter abandoned by its inhabitants. The Indians cannot persuade themselves to continue living in a place which is evidently haunted by evil spirits.

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648 Distant savage Chaco tribes have been in the habit of abandoning and destroying their villages after they have been visited by white men. In some cases the Indians, as soon as they have got to know through their spies that a party of white men are approaching, have burnt their villages and retired to the interior, unexplored parts of the country. Both Nordenskiöld and other travellers have noted with astonishment this custom of the Chaco tribes. Its true motives are to be sought partly in a natural fear of the whites, of whom the Indians have frequently had sad experience, but above all in superstitious dread of the mysterious disease-spirits

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter IX.

Social morality. Property. Law.

In the chapter on the social organisation of the Chaco tribes I had occasion to mention the social sympathy and feeling of solidarity which unites all members of the tribe, manifesting itself amongst other things in the widest hospitality. A few words may be added in this chapter to illustrate this characteristic feature of the social life of these Indians.

Mr. Barbrooke Grubb, who is probably the greatest living authority on the Chaco Indians, regards the »socialism« prevailing among these Indians as their greatest curse. According to him, it discourages competition in the way of one man striving to rise superior to his fellow-men and effectively impedes cultural progress in general. No Indian is encouraged to have more possessions than his neighbour, because, in obedience to the socialistic law, he would have to work for the support of others of whom he does not approve. Accordingly he produces no more than is absolutely necessary for current needs. He never saves anything for the day of adversity because others are not doing the same and therefore, if he had a store in reserve, the thriftless would step in and share it with him. It is owing to this system that the Chaco Indian has become the thriftless, lazy, and selfish fellow that he is. The chief endeavour of the Mission led by Mr. Grubb therefore was not only to impart to the Indians true Christian civilization in general, but particularly to destroy their old socialistic system with a view to making them self-reliant workers accumulating property by their own efforts.[1])

Mr. Grubb has naturally looked upon the conditions and moral character of the Indians with the eyes of a Christian missionary and may be quite right in his general contentions as to the best methods of civilizing a pagan

[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* pp. 189 sqq.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

Chapter XI.

Warfare.

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The warlike character of the Chaco tribes has become almost proverbial. This reputation may be well-deserved as far as some natives of this hidden and savage country are concerned, but it does not hold true for instance of a tribe like the Choroti. The Choroti are by nature a peaceful people, and in the small quarrels they have at certain times fought out, for instance with the Mataco, they have displayed so little both of organization and personal courage that it is impossible to believe that they have ever been that ferocious and warlike people characterized by v. Rosen. On the other hand, such important tribes as the Lenguas and the Chamacoco in the Paraguayan Chaco have been characterized as great warriors by Mr. Grubb and Sr. Boggiani; on the Pilcomayo the Ashluslay, at the time when I came in contact with them, were still extremely savage and constantly at war with the Bolivian soldiers, and the Tobas are one of the most warlike tribes in the whole of South America.

The Mataco too, seem formerly to have been great warriors, at any rate more warlike than the peaceful Choroti. On this point Pelleschi writes on them: »The Indians love war; one may say so because they are very often engaged in fights. One war is followed by another, owing to the desire of the vanquished to revenge themselves, or the pleasure which the victors have taken in it. The motive of a war is fishing, or hunting, or the gathering of fruits on others' territory, the desire to take revenge for some offence, or the hope of taking spoils.[1])

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I have not seen the *Tobas* on the war-path, and I cannot therefore give the same minute description of their feuds and the customs they observe after a victory as I have given of the wars and victory feasts of

[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 105.

[p. 102]

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

I had not planned to investigate. I hoped that the notes I took then would be useful for a more systematic and complete study of the Matako in the future. I should never have thought of publishing these tales and documents had I not good reason to believe that there is little chance for me to return to the Chaco.[1] Even if destiny should take me again to that country, I do not know whether the same material would be available. The disappearance of the old native cultures in South America is rapid, especially among tribes of a low cultural level.

The Matako, more than any other Chaco tribe, have been exposed to the degrading influence of white colonists, but there still remain some villages, especially on the upper Pilcomayo and on the middle course of the Bermejo, where the natives live according to ancient standards. Those who had their villages along the »linea», the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación, were the most miserable wretches that I saw in South America. Generous English missionaries try with very precarious means to rescue the Indians by extending to them the protection of the Mission stations and by helping during the critical period of transition from their native culture toward a new form of life. The mission work among the Matako has proved most successful. The Indians have shown extraordinary aptitude and under the direction of the English missionaries they display remarkable talents in crafts that they ignored completely a few years ago. Their zest for instruction has always been deep and their enthusiasm must sometimes be moderated. The rapidity and ease with which the Matako adapt themselves to our modern civilization remains one of the most puzzling problems that I met with in South America. Seen in their native environment the Matako seem to be the most irreducible tribe of the Chaco. Even their physical aspect carries an impression of

[1] I was unable to check many of the ethnological data given in the notes. To make them scientifically available I have reproduced the information in the very terms of the Indians.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

primitiveness more accentuated than that of other tribes. They are among the dirtiest peoples of South America, and in the sense of cleanliness they are inferior to the Toba.

Matako material culture does not differ markedly from that of any of the other Chaco tribes. Their weapons are the same, their houses of the common beehive type, and their craftsmanship is hardly distinguishable from that of their neighbors. Judged outwardly, the Matako might be confused with the mass of Chaco cultures. A keen observer notices a slight superiority in the agriculture of the Matako, as compared with the Toba. The distinctive character of Matako culture may only be appreciated in contrast with that of the Toba-Pilagá. While the Matako are generally peaceful the Toba are warlike and have almost always been the conquerors in the far distant regions. However, it cannot be said that the Matako have not also fought bravely against their enemies or that they are lacking in military tradition. Still the contrast between them is striking even to an observer like myself who has spent only a short time among these Indians. The difference between these apparently identical cultures lies primarily in the stressing of religion and magic among the Matako in contrast with the relative unimportance of like interests among the Toba. Although built on the same pattern as that of the Toba, the culture of the Matako is interwoven with ceremonial activities, ritual dances, and expulsion of spirits. It is almost impossible to stay with a group of Matako more than one day without having the opportunity to attend some ceremony. The traditional blowing of medicine-men upon the sick occurs among the Matako as among other Chaco tribes. It is always associated with dances together with spells of magic and has rarely the individual character of the same ceremony among the Toba. Not only are the peformances of Matako medicine-men more impressive than those of other tribes in the same area, the external appearance of the medicine-man and his assistants denotes the great importance given to ritual details and

/319/

Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 799 179 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171]

M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 124 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithlí*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklaněk*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
[534] and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence inti-
583 mate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
836 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit
[582] the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and
[606] wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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[152]

in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

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586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognized is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

[587] [589] Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. [682] Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

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182 [684] [628] [837] [583] [581] [586] [585] [582] 182 581

of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

NIELS FOCK
University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

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family will then be sent to the killer's village to ask whether the murdered woman's husband was at home the night before. If the answer is negative the murderer is known, and the families of the two victims will take up their arms and prepare to attack the killer's village. However, this was often merely a move undertaken to ensure the payment of blood money, compensation for the two lives, by the murderer's family.

Another example of the fatal results of a woman's infidelity is bound up in a custom that clearly shows the cruelty that formerly prevailed among the Mataco. If a man discovered that his wife had a lover, he could pretend ignorance and privately watch their habits and meeting place. One day he would follow his wife and wait in hiding until he could surprise the pair asleep. First he would kill his rival with an arrow, and then overpower the wife and cut her throat. He then dragged her out on to the path with legs far apart, slit up her stomach and lay her lover on top. The husband then crept back to his hut, seating himself at the fire with his bow and arrow in his hand waiting to see what would happen. Someone would soon come by the scene of the crime and come running back to the village, whereupon the man fled into the forest. As he could not be found a start was made with burying the two victims. In the meantime the murderer had crept close in and could hear what the wife's family said about him. At the moment they lowered the wife's corpse into the grave, and all eyes were looking down, the man shot one more arrow, killing the brother of the murdered woman. He then fled at great speed, reached his village and informed his family of the slaughter of the three persons. Both his father's and his mother's bands then armed themselves, and shortly afterwards the bands connected with the wife and the rival arrived to attack the village. This case is not merely a story, but a typical instance showing how adultery with the Mataco frequently leads to homicide and blood feuds between different bands.

Unfaithfulness is one of the chief reasons for divorce, which is a quite frequent occurrence with the Mataco. If on account of infidelity a man is divorced from his wife, he himself leaves the house taking with him only his personal effects such as fishing net, tinder, bow and arrow etc. He moves first to his parents' house, and later to the family of his new wife. Under these circumstances he cannot take his children with him unless they are so big that they themselves desire it. If the woman's unfaithfulness is the cause of the divorce, she will be evicted from the house, and not until later will her family come and fetch her personal property such as clay vessels, *yicas*, harvest of forest fruit, plus any goats and sheep. The children then stay with the father and can be brought up by his mother or some other female relative. It is always a general rule that at divorces the injured party retains house and children, and only the personal property is divided. However, it is not always that things go according to rule. Often, for example, an injured woman and her mother will visit her divorced husband's new house when he is away, remove his personal things and perhaps burn down the house.

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

114 It is strange that in the last two reports so much importance has been given to the Noctén tribes about which nothing is said by authors writing in colonial times. This in itself already tends to favor the hypothesis that the Noctenes may be the Tonocotés.

In this part of the continent it does not seem that there occurred that veritable extermination of whole tribes, such as was the case with the Charruas in Uruguay and we must therefore search about somewhere for the 60,000 and more Indians who understood or spoke the Tonocoté language. Among them were the Mataguayos, who exist down to the present day; it would be only natural, then, to affirm that Mataguayo is a dialect of Tonocoté, and since Noctén and Mataguayo are closely related dialects, it follows that Noctén is as much a dialect of Tonocoté as is Mataguayo.

In the following chapter I shall set forth a report which was sent to me by Father Eliseo Molina of the Franciscan College at Tarija. [609]

XIX

What Father Doroteo Giannecchini has to Say Regarding the Noctenes and Other Mataco Tribes

101 "The Noctenes, Matacos, Vejoses, Guiznaes, and Chulupies belong to one single nation, for all speak the same language and have the same customs."

"Such nations are differentiated by their name and by traits ● 184 which I shall call provincial or local."

"Our Noctenes, for example, who are the ones who inhabit the 101 country between the foot of the Pisapo mountain range and Pikírenda, 50 131 or 60 leagues to the east, are called Noctenes. In the vicinity of Pikírenda they take the name of Guiznaes; but they are of the same family as our Noctenes and are even related to them by blood."

"From Pikírenda onwards, some 30 leagues, more or less, and up to the Paraguay River they take the name of Chulupies; and along the whole right bank of the Pilcomayo River, from our first Noctén mission on to the Paraguay River, it is the same tribe: their

M 175 "Some 60 leagues from the mountains, the marshes of the Pilcomayo River, in the direction of the river Bermejo, are peopled by numerous Tonocotés and Lules who drew away from the territory of Tucumán at the time of the appearance of the first Spanish conquerors." (page 54)

"The nation which lives on the other side of this one (the Teuta) (1)

1. Possibly from "teuj-taj," meaning "big river," the Mataco name for the river Bermejo.--J. Pelleschi.

is the Mataguaye nation, which is the one closest to Jujuy." (page 76)

M 191 "Some are called Mataguayes Coronados and others Mataguayes Churumatas. The Coronados speak Guaraní, although this is not their mother tongue. The Mataguayes Churumatas understand and speak several tongues, such as Quichoa [sic], Guarany [sic] and Ocloya which they pick up from the captives which they hold as prisoners in their territory. They also understand the language of the Tobas. These M 175 Mataguayes were distributed in the following fifty towns: Neantiche, 621 Mocoy, Collemage, Auncapinhe, Hucohas, Hocohá, Oyaha, Natetehá, 109 Chinitiohé, Onin, Anuyguay, Alesnuy, Chayabo, Chioquiose, Hucoha, Chayquehé, Chachinamí, Pelo, Cahotochin, Nacalgoy, Chenesse, Halcacha, Cheneschá, Peque, Nitilinquin, Guays, Guocopa, Hucuchinami, Tiuquiahó, Hocalá, Leguelsehá, Oyaho, Carininquin, Yantis, Luguarache, Neglisehé, Loquelesse, Queyshé, Cotonhá, Tapela, Onoralgualache, Poytin, Hopitata, Hopitahé, Tatotehé, Lechonehá, Lohoteá, Tactoy, Apagatin, Rimpihá." (page 76)

194 Not one single time do we find the ending "gasta," although something similar to "a" and "aho" does appear. A negative proof must not be given undue importance, yet it ought not to be completely ignored [574].

IX

The Description of the Mataguayos
etc. continues

C M 175 "All these nations which we have mentioned with their towns, that is: Taynuyes, Teutas, Mataguayes, Agoyas, Xolotas, Tobas, Mocobies, Yapitalaguas, and also Aguilotes who live among the

until the contrary is proved we must suppose that Mataco is Tonocoté.
197 A language as strongly rooted as this one could not possibly have become lost in the Chaco.

The Mataco language is one of the most widely used languages and is spoken by the largest grouping [618] of Indians in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos, and yet we do not find it mentioned in any writings. One can therefore only deduce that the language of the Matacos is Tonocoté; this being the only rational hypothesis which for the present fits the case.

As far as languages go we can state that what the Mojos are to the Chiquitos, the Matacos are to the Chaco tribes of the Toba-Mocoví type, and just as the former have their Mosetana tribes so the latter have their Lules and Vilelas.

XXIII

Regarding the Names Tonocoté, Mataco and Mataguayo

101 Nothing better has been written about this than what Hervás has set down in his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" (Catalogue of Languages) on pages 168 and 172. He asserts that the Tonocotés are the Indians called Matarás and says the following:- "Matarás is a Peruvian word which is used to signify a grass which in Spanish is often called "espadaña," etc. The words Tonocot and Toconoté (read Tonocoté) have no meaning whatever in the Lule language, according to the missionaries to the Lule nation, who have told me that they have never heard that the Tonocotés or the Matarás (who are really the Toconotés) (1) were in any way related to the Lules. Yet the Indians

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1. Hervas always writes Toconoté instead of Tonocoté.

consider other tribes related to theirs when they speak the same language; a missionary to the Matarás has told me that he heard his Indians speak, on occasion, a language which was unknown to him and that when he had inquired as to what language it was he learned that it was an ancient language of the Matarás; but since this

missionary knows only the Quichua tongue, with which he communicated with the Matarás, it still is a moot question as to whether the Matará and Tonocoté languages are totally different or only dialects of the same language."

This short paragraph is one more proof of what I have been saying for some time, which is that the Fathers of the Company left more Quichua than they found in the regions which they evangelized. The Indians learn the neighboring languages with great ease; they have good memories, a well tuned ear and they pay much attention to everything which may be useful to them. [619]

The names Mataco and Mataguayo which in Father Techo refer to certain groupings and today are generic names of these tribes and their languages, are not the names with which the Indians used to refer to themselves. They called themselves Uicquñ.

To go into the etymology of the name Mataco without knowing who the first people were who applied such a name to these Indians would be a sterile job. It is probably a Quichua term or root and the only thing which might be said about it is this: that in the terms Churu-matas, Matará, Mataco and Mataguayo we find the common root Mata, which doubtless referred to some thing which was called by that name and which had to do with the persons or customs of these Indians or with the region they inhabited.

It is a strange thing that almost all the names by which we know the indigenous peoples of the Americas are artificial ones, as for example the name Guaraní; and the Matacos are by no means an exception to this rule. The Tobas called themselves Ntocovítt, and the Matacos, Uicquñ. Later, if we are able to prove that the Mataco "cq." is a mutation of "tt.," it may be seen that Uicq and Uitt are simply two variant forms of the same word meaning man.

Conclusion

An account has already been given of the Mataco Indians from the time of the coming of the Spaniards and the conquest of Tucumán in the sixteenth century. As the reader must have remarked we owed the information which we had to the Missionary Fathers, whose only object was to win souls for heaven and whose efforts in the direction of learning was limited to the end of reproducing for their catechumens, in a

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

The women themselves also weave the wool gathered from the few sheep they possess and arrange the natural wool colors in regular patterns of stripes or squares. They do not know how to make more ornamental figures.

In order to weave they stick four forked pieces of wood into the ground in the form of a rectangle, place a pole across each end to which they affix the warp threads and with a wooden blade about a hand breadth long thread and tamp the wool into place.

They call "weaving " potzin; the "loom" noccaléi, and the "threads" huoléi. These words, which have not the least affinity with the corresponding Spanish words, assure us that the Indians did not learn weaving from the Spaniards -- not that one should lay great stock either by similarities or by the lack of them in words to buttress a judgment of this nature (on the contrary, it happens that the Mataco always do all they can to keep from adopting foreign words to express new things, preferring to use their own words with small changes) but the fact of the matter is that we are not here confronted by one of these circumlocutions. Another possible cause for error might be found in the great difficulty which they have to pronounce words as we do. Furthermore there is the habit of taking Spanish words and modifying them to suit their own language as when they make from "cabra" [goat--Translator] caila, and from Pedro, Peiló.

All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

"moon" (i-que-lacq). In this they agree with the languages of all nations, a thing which is still preserved amongst us in poetic usage, while the common language of prose has undergone such changes with the passage of time that the words no longer appear to have their primitive material significance of sun and moon. M 805

Either by analogy from "moon" to "a light" or vice versa, the fact is that the word for both "moon" and "a light" is the same. M

This is not true of the word for "fire," for to this element special properties are attributed as the Chiriguanos condemn the bodies of those who die in the odor, or rather, taste, of evil, to be burned; and the Tobas and Matacos burn all bodies. This practice among the two latter nations is to be explained by their desire to hasten as much as possible the final condition which will benefit the deceased, that is, that as soon as the fleshy parts are consumed the soul will be able to descend into the earth and be among its companions. C 764

[213] Despite the fact that they are innocent of matches and sulfur, not to mention steel for striking fire, since they have no flint, they can produce fire at will. I have already described the manner in which they do this, by twirling one stick rapidly upon another which is lying on the ground until the sawdust which results -- which looks like finely powdered roasted coffee grounds -- begins to glow. Then they heap a kind of highly combustible wood onto it, blow it until a flame appears and from this they can make as large a fire as they wish. One of the two sticks which they use is from the chilca bush, which is aromatic, resinous and porous and is found in abundance throughout the Argentine Republic. M 372

It is customary to say that each Indian does everything for himself, and that this is the cause for his slowness and backwardness. But this is not so. They may be wanderers, but they do not for this reason refrain from a certain distribution of labor. There are amongst them weapon makers, canoe builders, net makers, weavers, etc., who sell their manufactured goods to their companions and receive others in exchange for them. They have, then, their guilds of arts and skills, but in an embryonic stage, of course. They also have particular terms to express themselves in this field, which in Mataco are formed from the word which indicates an object plus a particle indicative of function. Of these particles 'hi M 463 M 192 463

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; güu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something. for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lutek; "arrow maker" lutek-güú; "arrow owner," lutek-'hi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their M [415] belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's M [531] opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M 396 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 333 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

stemmed from the desire which the whites have of keeping the Indians from settling and taking possession (a fact recognized by Argentine law) of the excellent land which the local whites look upon as legitimate prey for the future.

They do not indulge in commercial enterprises; and how could they possibly do so when they have no agriculture or industries, being only wanderers and nomads? However, they do practice barter on a small scale, which is their only form of primitive, embryonic commerce. They do not have words for "buying and selling," and in order to express this idea it would seem that they had gone to some of school of economics to learn the exchange formula do ut des; for, strangely enough the Matacos, for example, instead of saying "sell me" say atquiocq niquiocq, which means "give me I give you."

One can gather from this that they have no form of money; but they have invented a word to signify our coins, which is tdócq-kynat among the Matacos and which means hide or skin of metal. Kynat is a generic word which covers all metals which do not exist or circulate in the Chaco. It would appear from this that it is a word invented prior to the appearance of paper money.

Nevertheless there is a sort of medium of exchange, though in only an incipient stage, among the inhabitants of the Chaco. It is a substance which the Indians use to paint themselves with and which is highly valued by them even in the smallest amounts. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra the plant which produces it is called urucú. This paint is obtained by boiling the fruit of the urucú for twenty-four hours, when the coloring matter floats to the top and is collected and made into small pellets of varying sizes. The dye is exuded from the skin of the fruit, which is about the size of an orange. The fruit with a blackist skin produces a black dye, the one with yellow skin gives an orange or red dye and the fruit having a white skin produces a green dye. The skin on the yellow and white varieties is about as thick as the outer covering on a walnut. Each one of the three grows on a different kind of urucú, all of which are plants which grow to be about as tall as a man, with fruit about the size of a pomegranate which split open of their own accord when they are ripe.

Although this substance is produced and made in Bolivia, it is current among all the Chaco Indians and is used by them to

satisfying the requirements of the inquisitive, if not those of the scientist (1).

1. In this translation, as is the case in dictionaries, the Spanish alphabet has been used for the reproduction of Indian words. J.P.

A nasal intonation runs through the whole of this language. There is hardly an occasion when h, j and q at the beginning of a syllable is not pronounced nasally -- the exception being when the final consonants of the preceding syllable is lost. I have come upon this phenomenon in all the South American languages with which I have had anything to do, but in none has it been so marked as among the Matacos. It may be because I know the other languages even less than I do this one. It is to this tendency that I attribute the shift from the Spanish ending ando to the Indian anno -- for example: tomando changes to tomanno -- our European languages have not escaped this change unscathed, witness the two letters m and n of our alphabet, the sonorous en and em of French, and the strangely comic way in which everybody pronounces words of endearment addressed to little children.

Another characteristic of this language is the apparent arbitrariness of its sounds. The reader will readily be able to appreciate this by just leafing through the dictionary: there seems hardly a time when the same word is pronounced in the same way, even when spoken by the same person, and this is even worse when it forms part of a sentence. It is truly enough to drive one to despair (!) and would lead to who knows what comparisons of inferiority but that, fortunately for the Matacos, there is a complete vindication and absolute proof to the contrary in that most glorious, polyphonic, word-rich (and in this sense -- that is of arbitrariness of sounds -- similar) language: English!

Chapter IV

Of words and the manner of their formation

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It is interesting and amusing to see the way in which these people form words to designate an object new to them. Observation is the supreme teacher.

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[241] For example, their name for "small bell" is quĩu-hút-tzét, meaning "spider belly" [no pun or connection in Spanish--Translator]; a rifle they call as our forefathers did, that is, arquebuse, that is, "fire bow" - itoj-letzej derived from itoj, "fire" and letzej, "bow"; they call "shot" "little bullets," as do the Italians, that is: c-lóquass, from c-lo meaning bullet and quass' which is a plural dimunutive ending. A piece of steel for striking fire with a flint, which they had never seen before (as was true also for all the things mentioned above) they call itoj-cquia, that is, "remedy or instrument of fire," while the flint itself they called ten-thé or stone; the wick they call itoj-léss from less meaning "sheaf," "bundle," "group," "family"; the cartridge shell they call c-lo-'hi from c-lo meaning bullet and 'hi, a particle which signifies "container" or "possession"; a mirror is tope-yaj-hi, tope-yaj meaning "image," "shadow"; a sock is ecolo-búth, which is derived from ecoló, "foot" and bhút, "covering." On the other hand shoe is to them nissót or sót, which proves that they already had knowledge of it, for they may on occasion use a kind of sandal such as that worn by the country people and called usutas. They make them from a piece of hide which serves as sole and two thongs which go between the large and second toe and are tied above the ankle. Matches [fósforos in Spanish--Translator] they call as we do ítossass, a contraction of itoj-quuass, which means "little fires"; and a match box is itoj-hi-huass, that is, "keeper of little fires."

A word which has always intrigued me and whetted my curiosity regarding its etymology is yúccúas which means tobacco, a product which was not known before in the Chaco. I think that I am not mistaken when I derive it from yu or iú, meaning "burned" and cúas, which means "to chew," "break up," "grind." As coincidence will have it, in these two activities both the use and the end result of the use of tobacco are involved. Furthermore, when an Indian says "give me some burned to chew" is he not saying pretty much what we do when we ask "give me something to smoke" [dame con que fumar in Spanish means literally "give me that with which to smoke"--Translator], that is, something to make smoke with?

Another analogy in expression of thought -- in addition to those resulting from words in detail and from many other elements -- is to be found in the use of téi to designate eyes and face, similar to the poetic use amongst us present-day Italians of víso for face, from the Latin visus, which means "sight."

A door they call hlappé bhut or "door-opening coverer"; and in this I believe that they are more exact than we who lack a term as clear and precise as is this.

They use the same word huolêi for wool, hair [cabello in Spanish is limited to "hair on the scalp"--Translator] and "hair" [pelo, that is, hair on any part of face or body other than scalp--Translator], but precede it with a name qualifying the respective object. We do the same thing but it passes unperceived when we say cabello to signify the hair of the scalp via a syncopation which puts its etymology on the wrong track. We have a great many such misleading word shifts in our language, and the Matacos have even more [242] which makes it even more difficult to keep tabs on them.

They use the same word huolêi for the leaves of trees, thus giving one to understand that for them leaves are the hair of trees. And really they come close in this to the actual physical facts for the trees which predominate in the Chaco are of the minosa family and have leaves which are complexly and minutely subdivided, thus giving rise to the botanical term "pinnate" and "bipinnate" which are terms that justify the Mataco name which is in such close agreement with the meaning of the scientific term pinnate [from the Latin pinna meaning feather--Translator].

It is worthwhile mentioning the way in which they distinguish between the tree and its fruit -- this is done by means of an inflection; for example: the mistol tree is O'hó-yucqué, its fruit is o'hóyaque; the vinal tree is attécque, its fruit attáje; the black algarrobo tree is uossot-etzúje, its fruit uossot-etzáje, and so forth.

One notices here the constant change of u to a. We do nothing different when we call the pear tree pero and its fruit pera, the apple tree manzano and its fruit manzana, and so forth. This does not mean that there are not other ways of naming these things.

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family relationship, let us say, for example, a nephew, has four different names.

An equally interesting form is that used for the demonstrative pronouns, which is similar to French usage for it is composed of the pronoun toj meaning "this one" (corresponding to the French ce) and certain particles of location such as licné for "that one over there"; letti or lani for "that one"; and others, among which are tzi for "this one." This tzi is equivalent to chi and to quii and is interesting because we come upon it again in the Araucanian language. These demonstrative pronouns also have an adjectival use, and when so employed, become separated, the toj part being prefixed to the noun and the licné, tzi etc. being suffixed, these latter can then not be declined, but the former (that is, toj) is declined. Now then, does not the same thing happen with French demonstratives? For instance with ceci and cela, which in the plural form are ceux-ci, ceux-la, and become separated when applied to some other term.

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And do such similarities in form not reveal a great harmony in human intelligence, the same linguistic recourses being used to express a like order of ideas in spite of the distance which separates the different races?

The following derivation deserves special mention because it is revealing of a whole order of ideas: "No" is ka, "nothing" is kiá, "nobody" is kiái; the three words keep to the same root, and in a way which is clearer and more logical than our corresponding words. Likewise we have tde meaning "no" and that meaning "nothing," these two terms used always at the end of a word or phrase.

Tell me now, what more elegant and more compactly logical does philology have to show than the manner in which the Matacos express possessing, containing, executing, or exercising a skill? The letter h (when it has an apostrophe it is to be pronounced nasally) shows up in many words, not to say all, which express possession or capacity. Now hi and huu express that which contains, he who possesses, and he who does something; huet means "house," "the place in which." For example: "fish" is yácsét, "fish pond" is yácsétte-hi; "shoes" are hissóhéss, "seller of shoes" is nissohésse-hi, "maker of shoes" is nissohésse-huu, and "shoe shop" is nissohésse-huet. And in all analogous cases they use the same

constructions. In what way can it be said that they are behind other languages? 192 196

[244] Thus for Venus they employ the same verbal image as we and the Latins do, that is lucero ["morning star"--Translator] ijuála-hu, "mother of the day"; similarly they call the wrist "mother of the hand," tcué-huo; the abispa tic-lan [Enigmatic. The closest I can get to any logical meaning is "the tic-lan wasp," which is not helpful at all --Translator] they call "mother of the tic-lan, tic-lán-huu; and the beating of the pulse is "little heart," tdul-lecuáj.

The Mataco language may be lacking in certain particular sounds (articulations) but, on the other hand, it has a superfluity of other particular sounds (articulations). Among these latter the following stand out: quía, quié, quií, quío, quíu, and cquiá, and so forth, which together with others of similar sound are so frequent as to leave one in some doubt as to whether the language is not made up of the same syllable repeated a thousand times over in the same sense. We know already that quiá, quié etc. can change places with tzá, tzé and so forth, or with chiá, chié, etc., or with tchía, tchié, etc. Furthermore the inversion of the constituent elements of a word is frequent, for example: "wide" is quü-tzaj-hu and also i-tzaj-quié -- it can therefore be readily understood to what extent Indian oratory can spread itself out and expand, as far as form goes, without really saying anything different. This sort of thing must be very generalized. General Mansilla in his outstanding book Una expedición a los Indios Ranqueles ["An expedition to the Ranquel Indians"--Translator] tells of having experienced this Indian fondness for repetitiveness, and I did also among the Tobas when we were harangued for half an hour and were really only told the same thing in several different ways according to Faustino the interpreter. 195

In their formation of compound words they follow the English and German usage; for example: "gloves," which are handschuhe in German, that is "hand shoes," are cqüéí-pbut among the Indians, that is "hand coverers." The same thing happens in negative sentences; example: "I do not see," is Ich sehe nicht in German and nu-ihenni-tde in Mataco, that is, "I see not," which is also precisely the manner of expression of the inhabitants of the areas surrounding Milan. 192 193

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They have general terms which represent certain abstractions such as "bird," "fish," "tree," and also particular ones with which they differentiate between particular species. What is more they even have abstract nouns, for in addition to such words as "never," "always," they have others, "fear" for instance, which they call uái, a word which also means "tremor" or "trembling." For earthquake they say hunat uái, which means "earth tremble," just as in Spanish one says "tremor of the earth." Can it be therefore that for the Matacos to fear is to tremble? Is it not in this way, taking the part for the whole, that our own abstract terms came into being in the great majority of cases? Now trembling is one, the commonest, of the many outward manifestations of fear.

I affirm that these Indians are in full possession of the human 151 intellectual faculties and ability to judge rationally, and these developed to such a degree that they can be considered our equals both in their way of reasoning and in their antiquity. The gap which exists between them and us is one which exists only in the actual world of facts and of the ideas which refer to [245] those facts -- a gap which is in no way proportional to that which exists between their intellectual faculties and ours. And this is easily understood. 000

How many years have gone by, how many were and how many are the individuals amongst us who have taken full advantage of the intellectual benefits of science, ethics and higher education generally? Very small in number are they if we take into account the historical antiquity of man and the number of men who have lived. The effects, therefore, of human psysiological traits must have changed the common heritage of humanity in the whole world during the period of its limited civilizations very little, if at all.

The fact of not having reflected on this phenomenon is the cause behind the ignorant persons's astonishment at being confronted with the advanced conditions and relative progress to be found amongst savage peoples.

The short intellectual and moral distance which separates them from us is an eloquent testimony to the hoary antiquity of man, dating back to the separation of man from his pre-human ancestors, which dwarfs into insignificance the few years which separate us from a state of savagery akin to that in which these Indians live.

Chapter V

Augmentatives and Diminutives

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Another thing which almost drove me to insanity was the nomenclature of the domestic animals which were introduced to America from Europe at the time of the discovery or conquest.

It is well known that when new things are introduced into previously unopened areas the names of these things are also introduced. It is also known that this fact has been of inestimable value, not only to philologists but also to ethnographers, that is, to those who deal with and study the distribution and description of the earth's peoples.

Very well then, -- it would happen that when I asked for the local names for horse, cow, sheep, etc., the Indians would answer with names which were absolutely different from the Spanish names.

Even now I get an urge to laugh when I remember the tortures to which I submitted the Mataco words in order to try to boil them down, by dint of hypothetical changes and shifts, to their Spanish roots.

I was fortunate enough one day to catch two pigeons in a trap.

We had on board with us a beautiful bulldog. In Mataco the word for dog is sinój, and we had named our dog Palomo ["pigeon"--Translator], which the Matacos [246] literally translated into their own language as ucquinataj. One day it happened that an Indian, on patting the dog, said, by way of expressing his admiration: Sinoj-táj! instead of Sinoj or Ucquinatáj. I started then to realize that the particle taj expressed size of superiority, that it was a loose or floating affix, and that it could be added to or taken from other words in order to modify their meaning. I flew to my note books, leafed through the pages, ran through my lists of nouns, added taj to those which did not have it, and in an instant there sprang up before my eyes, to my immense satisfaction, the true, beautiful, philosophic, scientific etymologies of my quiuuasse-táj, "cow"; yelatáj, horse; chíonataj, "sheep"; quiuasset, "deer"; yeláj, "tapir"; chionaj, "doe" -- with the famous taj which enlarges, ennobles and stretches them and declares them to be superior.

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So it was that it suddenly dawned on me that in those words, which I had jotted down in their scores, and which ended in taj, I must eliminate that syllable, as also the famous uu or a or la, and tune my ear and sharpen my eye for the sounds which were basic and essential to each word. At the same time that I started to see this more clearly, I began to discover the genesis and the laws governing the word changes.

From there on a new region began to open up for me into which I readily and happily entered.

I hope that the reader will not become scandalized at this sort of enthusiasm which he may perceive in me. In my position he might well have experienced the same thing, for man is a slave to circumstances -- any Minister of State who becomes for a while a private soldier will take pleasure in noticing the look of approval from his corporal for a well executed "present arms"; as will the philosopher when praised by his lady for having helped her to untangle her skein of wool.

So how could a nobody such as I not feel pleasure on seeing, in his own hands, so to speak, a language which had been considered impoverished and of no account, take shape and flower into a methodical and elegant tongue?

Well, anyway -- these Matacos have an augmentative particle: taj, which is used to indicate physical, "moral" and descriptive qualities. So from ícnú, man, they form ícnú-taj, large man, from inót, "water," they form inót-táj "fire water" or brandy, and from ahló, pole or rod, they form ahlotáj-yacaré, "almost pole" or "nearly pole."

As a diminutive they sometimes use the particle quuáj and quiáj; for example: from colo, foot, they derive coló-quuáj, little foot; from cuéi, hand, they make cuéi-quiáj, little hand. They also use this latter term to indicate a person who is either lacking a hand -- or the whole arm -- or has a severe malformation in it. [The word "manco" in Spanish means any one of these--Translator.] So a chief called Manco in Spanish -- he actually lacked a hand -- was called in Mataco Cuéi-quuáj. This diminutive particle is also added to pronouns, a thing which cannot be done in Italian but can in Spanish, to wit: esa - esita ["That (feminine) one" -- "that little (feminine) one"--Translator] --which is very frequently used by country people.

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These suffixes taj and quuaj and quiaj, although they are well defined particles, may nevertheless, and probably ought to, be considered as [247] inflections, for they mean nothing by themselves and furthermore it is they which are declined and not the words to which they are attached (1). And it is worth noting that

1. I find in my notes that taj is sometimes a shortened form of oitaj, meaning "almost."

in the matter of declension they follow a rule quite contrary to the one used for the suffixes corresponding to demonstrative pronouns; the same phenomenon which is encountered in French and Italian diminutives. Taj and quiaj, of which the plurals are tass and quiáss, divide and separate as do the demonstratives, for example: "box of matches" is itoj-ʾhi-cuass, that is "fire-box-little"; a case of incorporation (2).

2. In Mataco, "matches" is translated as "little fires," itoj-huaj (euphonic h in place of c), thus following our usage even in this detail.

Finally, it seems that they habitually place an i in front of a foreign word. For example the Spanish ñato ["snub nose"--Translator] becomes iñato, in which they coincide with the Mocoví Indians. It may be just a simple euphonic exigency.

Chapter VI

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Some curious cases of onomatopoea and sound similarities.

Only very few words in this Indian language can be considered onomatopoetic, that is, imitative of the sounds they express. Which phenomenon of sound imitation is considered by some to be the origin of human language, developed later by man's intelligence.

To shout or yell is óhn; lightning is jlépp; dumb or mute is huó-huó; cough is cacojtáss; cricket is li-tzil; parrot is quie-quié

and pelican [sic.], commonly called chajá ["Crested screamer" is W. H. Hudson's name for this large, goose sized bird--Translator] is tzá-coj, both names being derived from the bird's call. Many other words are to be found similar to these.

Following I shall set down a few Mataco words which are similar in sound to those found in Old World languages.

Si["yes"--Translator] in Mataco is hié, in English "yes," in German ya, and in Italian gia. "No" in Mataco is ka, in the Tuscan dialect of Italian cke, and kein ("nobody") in German. "Son" is tzé or ssé in Mataco, tzé in Bohemian, tzae tze in Chinese. Enfermo ["ill"--Translator] is iell or yell in Mataco, "ill" in English. "For" is op in Mataco, ob in Latin--it may be added that p and b are interchangeable in all languages with the greatest of ease. "Countryside" or "field" is ajlú in Mataco, agro in Latin and Italian -- let it be remembered that the Matacos use l in place of r, so that ajlú takes the place of ajrú -- "dog" is sinoj in Mataco, cynos in Greek. The next few words contain similar letters in inverted order such as in the previously mentioned "melon" - nelom: "rooster" is húh or kúh in Mataco, coq in French; "cricket" is li-tzil in Mataco, zillo in Tuscan; casa ["house"--Translator] is hauet in Mataco, haus in German, [248] "house" in English, and huasi in Quichua; con ["with"--Translator] is uuitd in Mataco, "with" in English; "and" is ut-cuei in Mataco, atque in Latin.

Furthermore, and as an additional point of interest, I must say that there is, in Chinese, a superabundance of the syllables tzia, tzie, etc., schia, schie, (sch to be pronounced as is the Catalonian x), tzá, tzé, etc., as also ttai or tai, which mean "big"; and lo, the meaning of which is still unknown to me but which I repeatedly come across at the end of words. This fact, combined with its pronunciation, which is practically identical to Mataco pronunciation, merits serious reflection on the part of the linguist, not because of any real relationship but as a phenomenon of concurrence.

Chapter VII

Gender, Number, case, syncopation. Article?

a. Gender

It does not seem to me that the nouns have gender -- only in pronouns and in demonstrative adjectives are there to be found certain changes which make me suspect a gender differentiation. Yet this goes no further than the merest suspicion.

Withal, they do suffix the ending tzináˊ to the names of female animals, which means "female," and, when used alone and not attached to another word, means "woman"; for example, "mare" is yĕlaiáj-tzináˊ. In order to indicate a male animal they usually add asnáj, which actually means "male."

b. Number

I was so sure that these inhabitants of the Chaco must possess a plural formed by the joining or placing in close proximity of some word indicative of the concept of plurality, such as "much" or some other like word, that I was for ever in search of it. Actually there was nothing unnatural about such an idea -- the Guaranî Indians do in fact use such a linguistic device, heta, which placed beside a singular immediately imparts plurality to it; the Quichuas also do likewise by suffixing cuna, and these two nations of Indians are or were neighbors of the Matacos. Many other peoples use the self same artifice which is called agglutination; the Akka of Africa do so too.

It seemed therefore quite natural that the smaller should follow in the footsteps of the larger. Furthermore, is it not often stated that agglutination is common to the less advanced languages?

[249] It is a fact that in this case also it would seem as if the peoples who utilize this recourse are the least advanced -- actually this is very far from the truth.

In short, every language system has its weak points, which nevertheless do not detract from their basic usefulness among those who utilize it. It was therefore proper for me to accept this

linguistic canon as a sort of maxim.

However, the answers to my questions in which plurals were used were anything but satisfactory. Sometimes the plural of a word would end in one way, then another plural would end differently, and in all plurals there could be inserted a ntocq, meaning "much." What is more, just as all the rest of the expression varied, so also did one remain in the dark regarding the element connoting plurality. I would formulate my questions with numbers and the doubt still remained. For example: "Two horses?" I would ask, and the answer would come "horses two"; "two men?" "two icnû, icnul, or icnuíl." They appeared to be endings with different variations due to changes in pronunciation rather than to any other cause.

I repeat all this because it may be of some service to any of the many travelers who enjoy spending time among savages, either in Africa or in America. If they are not already too proud of their own knowledge and acumen it may stand them in good stead.

Meanwhile, I was surprised to gather that "we" and "you" [vosotros is 2nd person plural in familiar address--Translator] were formed directly from the singulars "I" and "thou" [tú, is 2nd person singular in familiar address--Translator] by means of the same affix. Thus, from noj-lâm, meaning "I," noj-lâm-il, "we," is derived; from am -- meaning "thou," they form am-il, meaning "you" [2nd person plural--Translator] -- but in this case it was a matter only of those pronouns in which there are many rule exceptions. Nevertheless this very thing, by calling my attention to a given case, gave me the key to the riddle.

These Matacos not only have a plural which they form with ntocq - "much," but also possess others which are arrived at in different ways and by means of assorted inflections. To sum up, they have divers declensions which are exclusive of each other and which hold, in a general way, to the following rules:

Words ending in either o or velar e add i to make the plural. Thus colo, meaning "foot," becomes coloi, "feet"; huentié, "little bird," becomes huentiéi, "little birds." Words ending in aj change j to ss -- in this category fall all the augmentatives ending in taj and all diminutives ending in quiaj, for

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example: igüela -- "moon" or "month," becomes igüelass, "months"; yelataj -- "horse," becomes yelatass, "horses." Words ending in u take an l, which is pronounced by pressing part of the tongue against the palate and sounds like il, for example: cannú, meaning needle, becomes cannúl, almost cannuil, "needles." Words ending in t, oj and other letters take ess for the plural; thus: yápset, "fish," becomes yápsetéss, "fishes"; tdoj, "hide or skin," becomes tdojess, "hides." Words ending in l often add ess [sic.], sometimes losing the final l in the process; example: tzel, "belly," [250] tzeliss, "bellies"; yel meaning "a sick person" becomes yiss (or yéliss), "sick persons" -- this last being a fine example of shift.

Many exceptions have their place here too, of course, and probably other rules, but they are not included here so as to avoid becoming burdensome.

I am almost willing to believe that they have a dual approach to plurality as have the Araucano and Guaraní Indians, and the Greeks in Europe, but I cannot give any real assurance of it. To this effect I site from my notes: cqüeí -- the hand, cquéyai, both hands; noj-lamil -- we, noj-lamáss, we two; amil you [2nd person plural familiar --Translator], amass, you two. I repeat, however, that I am not sure but that it is a duplicated plural form.

As far as numerals go they can use, or not, as they see fit, a plural for following nouns, in which case use of a plural is, so to speak, redundant. Adjectives they do not pluralize, and they place them before nouns.

c. Case

I have not come across enough examples to allow me to affirm that this language has case declension unless one wishes to construe as such the genitive suffix ca. Here is an example of the use of this suffix: Peilo-ca-Uicquii, which means "Pedro's people." Their use of postpositions (corresponding to our prepositions) can be considered as cases.

In spite of this I must give fair warning that the personal pronouns "I" and "thou," at least in the singular, have case declension, while toj, meaning "this one" seems only to have an accusative toja.

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The declension of those pronouns which I have been able to glean are as follows:

Singular	Singular
Nom. I: nojlam, nu, noʾni.	Nom. Thou: am, or ham, and a
Gen. of me: noj-ca	Gen. Of thee: aj-cá
Dat. To me: nú-ho	Dat. To thee: ám-u or hám-u
Ac. Me: nuy-a or nu	Ac. Thee: ám-a and a-i
Ablat. With me: nuy-ej	Ablat. With thee: ám-ej or ám-quie.

Plural	Plural
Nom. We: noj, lam-il, na or inát	Nom. You [familiar]: am-il or a
Nom. [sic.] Us: noj, lam-áss and in-namáss	Nom. [sic.] You [familiar]: am-ass, or á

It is my opinion that the ending l and il must be some degeneration of the word el, which means "other" and which was originally used to express the plural, which plural is therefore [251] nothing else than a forgotten agglutinative form which has evolved by means of progressive alterations.

d. Syncopation

Syncopation is very common in this language, doubtless for reasons of euphony, but the alteration and confusion it brings about in words give rise to many errors and make the study of the language very difficult. For example: "Do you love me?" is Yajáemín nuya, which is a shortened form of yaj-a-hemin nuya. "I do not love you" is Namahemin, which comes from Nu-am-a-hemin. I myself, shortly before writing these lines, thought that nam must mean "no," which then threw me into confusion because in this present example I could not find the particle nu,

expressive of the first person. Only after having checked and compared numerous sentences were my eyes opened to the real facts.

Chapter VIII

Regarding Negative Forms

The Mataco language contains a great many negatives which occupy various positions. It is curious to note their strange similarity to the Indian languages of North America spoken by nations which one would never have supposed to be related at all.

The most common of these negatives is ka, meaning "no," which can be used alone and also prefixed to adjectives thus contradicting the meaning of the word; for example: matt means "it is true," while ka-matt means "it is false." It is strange indeed that the Akkas, those so-called pygmies of Africa have this same word in their language with the same meaning "no," according to the grammatical essay of Abbot Beltrame of Verona.

Another negative particle is tdé, which is always suffixed, for example: mát -- "true"; matti-tdé, "false."

Note the extra i which is added to soften the word. These additions and eliminations of stray letters cause great difficulty and make the student of this language lose his way at every turn, despairing of ever getting to the end of his problems. Let us look at another example: nu-huen means "I have," hue-ni-tde, "I have not."

Then there is am, which is prefixed to verbs, as for example: n'am-huen, which signifies "I do not have." There also is yaj, which is both interrogative and imperative and is prefixed to verbs; it is the ne of the Latins, except for its position. Another negative particle is laja, which also means "without." Examples of the foregoing are: "Don't kill me," yaj-lon-nu; "Do you love me?", Yaj-a-hemin-nuya? "Widow" is laja-chiécuó-ya, that is, "husbandless one."

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Regarding Adjectives

a. Their usage

I have now before me the tangled problem of adjectives, comparatives, superlatives, numerals, and verb flections. There is no reason to prefer one to another and so I start with the one first mentioned.

One would think that adjectives ought to be like so many isolated plant stems, growing in such a way that a mere touch of the hand would be sufficient to turn them aside in order to pass easily by. Such is not the case. There are some which have their roots and even their branches so intertwined and enmeshed that one has need of an axe to untangle them.

There are a good many adjectives which are so rooted as to make it impossible to ascertain their beginning and their end -- in fact, most of the Mataco adjectives fall into this category. There are others, though, the geneology of which is quite evident. Among these are the possessives, which are formed from pronominal roots to which the particle ca, meaning "of," (also used as a genitive postposition) and co, which must be considered as a modification of ca, has been attached. In addition to ca and co they also use lo with the same possessives, especially, or so it seems to me, with "of mine," "of thine"; thus "of mine" (nuj) is nuj-ca, nuj-co, and nuj-lo; while "of thine" is ac-co and al-lo; and "whose?" ("of whom?") is atdec-lo.

Another way of forming these adjectives is with the addition of tzaj. For example: "fear" is uáĭ or huái and "fearful" is huain-tzaj. Another possibility is with ya, but this is really more like a present participle. Example: nu-huai-ya, means "I fearful," "that I am afraid"; acchecuoya means "that you have a wife" or "that you have a husband."

Yet another way is to place the postposition ej beside the noun. Example: "hunger" is na-in-lo; while "hungry one" is na-in lo nej; "now" is cquiá, (which literally means "fresh" or "new") and "of now," "as of now" is cquiá-yej.

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And while on this subject of adjectives it is worth remarking that practically all those which express the opposite of some quality, usually of a good quality, are made up of the adjective denoting that quality plus a negative particle which either precedes or follows it. Thus, for example: "true" is matt, and "false," ka-matt or mattildé, that is to say "not true." "Good" and "pretty" or "nice" are hiss and tzî, while "ugly" is kat-zía and tzitdé; "far" is tocuery, "near," tocuei-tde, which can also be expressed by ca-tu-ta, in which catú means "elbow" and by analogy "curve," "around the corner," and so forth.

These negative particles are also used with nouns. For example: [253] "remedy" or "cure" is ckia, while poison is ka-ckía ("no remedy," "no cure"). Do we not find the same type of usage in our own languages when we say "uncertain" for "not certain" and "discourteous" for "not courteous"?

One might say, however, that these Indians lack certain refinements of which our language can boast and which tend to soften certain expressions, as for instance the subtle distinction between "false" and "not true," "far" and "not near."

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Be that as it may, they still are not lacking in other distinctions, such as that existing between "stranger" and "foreigner." The former they call ajlu-taj-jlé-lé, which means "outsider," and the latter they call ic-quiomjlé-lé, that is, "he from below." And so he is, for from the Mataco point of view foreigners live "below," downriver and off past Paraguay. Upstream from them live the whites, whom they call Chihuéle.

Where did they get this word Chihuéle? Has it something to do with color? "White" is in their language pelaj, and "yellow," yaccatdé, that is, "not black," which proves that the opposite of black is for them yellow. Surely they do not consider us green or blue, however much their eyes may suffer from Daltonism. Can it be that they look upon us as red? This cannot be so either for red is icquiótt, which is a far cry from Chihuéle.

The actual fact is that Chihuéle means "good looking men."

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Let us study this. Chí, as we have already stated, is the same as tzí, and also the same as quí. Now tzi is a root found in ka-tzi-a and in tzitdé which mean "not good" (or "not nice") and "good not" (or "nice not"). Furthermore it is to be found in tzilataj or chilataj, meaning "good," "nice." (The local whites, by the way, mispronounce the first part of this word and say chilátta). Chilatáj is made up, in the first place, of táj which is an augmentative particle, and Chíla. In the word Chíla, the la is a particle which, as was seen in the section treating lo, ca and co, if suffixed to the root has an adjective-forming function. So it is that Chí is the root giving the basic meaning to Chílataj. Chilataj, however, means "good," "nice" to a superlative degree, so that chi is indicative of "beauty."

We have seen that c-lelé is a word which means "which is of." Now, there can be no difficulty in accepting, for a language such as this one which sacrifices so many nuances of sound, that c-lelé has become modified and changed into güele or huéle by degeneration or because of some other shift the laws of which have not yet been discovered. Therefore Chihuéle is the same as Chic-léle, which means "those who are of the good (or nice, or goodlooking) ones," that is "The Goodlooking Ones."

I hope I may be forgiven for taking pleasure in an etymology which allows me to participate in, (although I do not deserve to) and be counted as possessing one of those four qualities declared by the Greek philosopher as indispensable for happiness, to wit: comfort, true friends, love of music and good looks [254] or to be considered so, which amounts to the same thing for all practical purposes.

Now amongst these Indians, even if one is somewhat ugly, one must yet, by comparison seem almost goodlooking, which is great -- are not these word forms therefore rational? They reveal a process of word formation by agglutination.

b. Regarding comparatives

In order to form the comparatives they use homo ehom, which means "more," together with taj, which expresses superiority.

These two words in a comparison are not joined by any equivalent to our "than" [In Spanish comparatives are formed with de or que; the foregoing "than" does not fully translate these terms--Translator.], such as in the following example: "Peter is a better boy than Paul," because they, in this case, would also say, by means of a circumlocution: "Peter is a better boy than Paul is not." This is a somewhat strange construction, but I find that it crops up repeatedly in my notes. Very often the particle ya follows the comparative, which leads me to believe that there are other comparative forms, although I have not discovered them as yet.

c. Regarding the Superlative

To form the superlative they habitually use ntócq which means "much," as is the custom in so many other tongues. They sometimes lengthen the sound of a syllable. For example: "far" is tocuéy; "very far" is tocuéey, the word being accompanied by appropriate gestures. This is also customary amongst the Araucanos and we ourselves use it in certain cases. It is quite natural and logical.

Another way of arriving at a superlative construction is by affixing a to the positive -- for instance: the comparative of the Indian word "his," which means "nice, pretty," is ha-is, "very pretty, very nice"; tocuéy, far, becomes a-tocuéy, very far.

As I have already said they have an augmentative taj and a diminutive quiaj or cuáj, particles which are suffixed and which are declinable while the noun to which they are attached remains unalterable -- their declension consists in changing j to ss for the plural.

In order to say "less" they use yaj-lom, which is the same as yaj-lehom, that is "no more," made up of the particle le plus hom; another example of agglutination, common in this type of adjective. This language is apparently extraordinarily logical, and once having started out in a given direction persists in it to the end. The problem then, in the first place, is to understand this construction, and then to keep from losing sight of it in its many twists and turns. [255]

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gesticulations, must be a whole sentence. Even though a great deal of time has elapsed I think I can still explain them and not fall into error as I do so.

"One" is hoté-cuuaj ʾhi, and one finger is raised. One can also say hoteji and hotecoaji. Now hoté means "as," cuuáj means "finger," and hi (nasal h) is a particle which indicates possession, container etc. so, not worrying too much about this small elemental difference which is so common in every language, and especially in this one which undergoes so many shifts, we may say that the translation of hotécuaji is: "as finger has" ("this which I show").

"Two" is hoté quuasi, and two fingers are raised. Quuas is the plural, so to speak, of cuoaj according to this tongue, and thus the translation of the above is "as fingers has."

"Three" is laj tdi qua yél, and three fingers are raised, the little finger remaining folded and covered by the left hand. Now laj means "without" or "no"; el means "other"; quai is too similar to quoají to allow for doubt, and so we may say that the translation is "without the other finger." The same may be said for lája echecuoya -- "widower without a husband" [sic].

"Four" is tdi qualéss híquí and I don't know how to go about translating it literally and so shall not try. However one can perceive that in qualéss there is a plural iqui form, which is a word that often accompanies hi, and which [258] is to be found in phrases in which we have the idea of "to be" expressed, with other analogous ones -- it is therefore probable that it refers to the gestures which go with each numeral.

These gestures were not made only by that chief but also by other Indians of the central Chaco and by Faustino who could count as well as any of us. There must be some relation between the gestures and the words. The etymologies which I offer, in my opinion, explain the case more satisfactorily than those which are usually given in analogous philological problems.

However, one must not judge the worth and elegance of the original by the literal translations. Where would the elegance of most compound words be if we translated their Greek originals directly? For example; "Panorama" -- "all seen....!!"

And as far as the intellectual value of this manner of expressing numerals is concerned, is its genesis not quite natural? The Guaraní

Indians manage by means of a similar artifice, at least with some of their numerals such as "ten" or "twenty" in place of which they say "two hands" and "two hands and two feet." And it is probable that, should we analyze the etymologies of numerals among other Indians and other nations, we would find something similar. What shall we say of Roman numerals? Do they not represent as many fingers as are needed to count up to three, and a whole hand for five (V) and a hand minus a finger for four (IV), and two superimposed hands -- one being inverted -- for the (X)? It is quite clear that Roman written numerals are to Arabic numerals what hieroglyphs are to writing and what Mataco numeral expression is to the spoken tongue.

It is precisely from nature that man must first have derived the first instruments for expressing his needs and for the development of his ideas.

Chapter XI

Pronouns and Pronominal Particles (1)

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1. Interpolated chapter.

a. Personal Pronouns

The most commonly used personal pronouns are the following:

	Singular	Plural
1.	I - no-j-lam	1. We - no-j-lam-il; no-j-lam-ass (dual?)
2.	Thou - ám, hám	2. You (familiar form) am-il and am-ass (dual?)
3.	This one - tój	3. Those ones toj-ess.

I also have come upon inat, inená and innamáss as plural first person pronouns.

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b. Pronominal Particles

These particles are prefexed to nouns and verbs in every case where the state or action refers to persons; which is why they are so frequently encountered, to the extent that in a dialogue there is hardly a word to which they are not affixed. This phenomenon, added to the elision to which their vowels fall heir when brought into contact with the vowels of the words which they precede, often produces the illusion that they are part of the root of those words.

These particles are as follows in singular and plural, for nouns and verbs:

1st My (singular object), My (plural object), Our (singular object) Our (plural object), I and Us: no, nu, ni, na.

2nd Thy (singular object), Thy (plural object), Your (familiar plural form with singular object), Your (familiar plural form with plural object), Thou and You (objective) -- a, ha.

3rd Of his, of theirs, that one, those ones -- lo, lu, le.

In addition to these particles of relation they customarily use others which are also prefixed to a given word root and which give the absolute or general meaning to the expression. The particles are more frequently t and l, and often la. For example: "flame of fire" is itoj-cúáca; "flame" (in general) is la-cúáca; "hut door" is huet-pè, while "door" (in general) is la-pé or hla-pé.

c. Demonstrative Pronouns

Singular	Plural
This one -- Toj	These ones -- Toj ess
and Toj-tzi,	and Toj-ess-tzi,
Toj-chi	Toj-ess-chi
and Toj-qui.	and Toj-ess-qui
That one yonder -- Toj-licné	These ones yonder -- Toj-ess-licné
That one -- Toj-láni and Toj-léc-ti	Those ones -- Toj-ess

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In combination, toj or toj-ess precede and tzí, etc., licné, lání etc., follow the word or phrase.

d. Interrogative Pronouns

Who? -- adhéj or âdéj.
What? -- atde or hat dezu. [260]

e. Reflexive Pronouns

J-lam -- suffixed -- meaning "same," (the Latin met) is used as personal pronoun and is the root element in the adverbs j-lam-mej, which means "always."

Chapter XII

Regarding Verbs

a. General Observations

The verbs are the really difficult elements in this language to nail down. I confess my ignorance; I cannot even point out an infinitive, an infinitive that is, which I can be absolutely sure is an infinitive. It might be, if I had sufficient time, that I could get to the bottom of the problem but I just do not have enough time to work on it at present. I must add, however, in defense of my good name, that the fault does not lie entirely with my limited intelligence but rather is in greater part due to the many intricacies of this wretched language and to the absolute lack of even the vaguest idea of grammatical forms on the part of my Indian interpreters. When, for example, one asks them how to say "to eat," they are at a loss for an answer, or else give a different answer every time they are confronted with the question. One must ask them how to say "I want to eat," and then "let's eat" and in this way lead them gently to the basic question. And then one comes up against a solid wall.

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for "to eat" together with "to want" is expressed by a special form which includes both ideas. And so it goes.

And then there are the different forms and ways of saying things. For instance, Spanish for yo tengo ("I have") reproduces the French c'et a moi and the Latin id est mihi, and one must run the risk of saying that es ("is") means tengo ("have"). Well, it seems that these Indians have some of these idiomatic expressions too.

And what will the reader think if I say that I have not even been able to discover the plural of verbs? There is a particle en or hen, according to the ending of the word which precedes it, which undoubtedly expresses plurality, but I do not know whether it is a pronominal particle or rather a real verbal inflection. For example: "dance" [singular, imperative--Translator] is catin and "dance" [plural, imperative--Translator] is catinén. So far so good, but let us look further -- "let us dance" is inát-catin, in which the en has become lost and inát meaning "we," has appeared, but in an analogous case this does not happen at all -- for instance: "touch" [singular, imperative--Translator] is hen quié, while "let us touch," is inénhequién, in which there are a number of changes for reason of euphony and pronunciation ease [261] but among which there can easily be distinguished, in the background, the en which had disappeared in "let us dance." This, in itself, would not be a serious problem for it might mean only that there were two plural forms. The real trouble lies in that if we combine the example with subject and object we notice that hen or en agrees with the object and not with the subject, the verb never taking on a passive or neuter quality as happens with certain Latin verbs such as videor, loquor, etc.

For example: "kill [imperative, singular--Translator] the sheep (sing.)" is l-lón tzonatáj; "Peter has killed the sheep (sing.)" is Peiló ilón tzonataj; "Peter has killed the sheep (plural) is Peiló ilonén tzonatáss. Where now is the rule which required the particle en in "dance" (imperative, plural), "let us dance," etc.? This type of confusion crops up dozens of times.

Another confusing example: iloje means to cure; iil means "the sick (one)" but in order to render "the Indians are curing the sick" into the Mataco language one must say uicquiei ilojeje tojiilnen. Where does the "rule of incorporation" begin and where does it end in this sentence?

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So all I can say with any certainty is that en and hen are more often than not found in conjunction with plurality. I say more often than not because it is not always so. For example: "The whites have killed a sheep" is Tsiguuéle tzonataj. Apparently this plural construction with en is not used with the verb except when the object of the action of that verb is plural, or when the plural subject of the verb is one which receives the verb's action, as for instance in "to dance." This seems to indicate that in the syntax of these verbs there is a great difference when compared to ours. There is possibly a similarity in some chases to English verbal usage -- i.e., "I am told," "We are told" etc., in place of "They have told me," "They have told us," which is analogous, after all to the Latin neuter in videor, etc.

b. Regarding Tenses

To judge from the welter of verb forms which I have before me I think I can give assurance that this language has many conjugations. On this score it would be similar to Guaraní, which also has many, and would be very different from the Araucano language, which has only one, and also from the Quichua which likewise, or so it seems to me, has only one -- though an extremely complicated one in compound tenses.

From all the foregoing the reader will gather that I cannot possibly present one or more types of verb conjugations because I have not been able to describe them. Despite this, however, I am in a position to give some forms for a few of the tenses.

One of the more exact of these is the future, which is expressed by means of the present plus a final syllable la. For example: "he returns" is tapil, while "he will return" is tapil-la. This is what might be called the absolute future, for there is another future which I shall call the dubitative and which is formed with the addition of pbiye, which means "may be," this being added at the end. The lá future form is also used to [262] connote duty or obligation to do something, which is also true of our language.

Another form is the past, which consists of adding é to the present form preceded by a repetition of the last letter of the present tense form -- for it is one of this language's idiosyncracies to repeat certain letters, as is done in Italian and so many others, with the

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exception of Spanish. Example: "he arrives" is yom, while "he has arrived" is yommé.

The remote past or preterite, however, is formed by placing the adverb of time náji or náje next to the present, the n being replaced by another letter, usually l, if it falls pleasantly on the ear. For example: "he kills" is ilóm, while "he killed" (preterite) is ilonnaje. Sometimes aje alone is added, as for instance: "he eats"--théuccue, "he ate" -- théu quàje.

Another way of forming the immediate past (which almost corresponds to the imperfect) is by adding nenna, which they use either whole or else reduced to one or other of its two syllables according to the speakers personal whim.

These two words náje and nénna are the same ones which are used in the word "yesterday" -- icuala-náje and "today" -- icuala-nenná; (see how logical these savages are), and, as is the case with the future lá, are set off from the verbal element proper in order to allow for the addition of some infix or other, which may even be a whole phrase.

c. Regarding Personal Flections

It would seem, to judge from the above examples, as if the language of these Indians were totally lacking in verbal endings which had anything to do with persons, although they are -- to a certain extent -- related to number by means of the suffix en. However, be it because of a merely casual pronunciation difference, be it intentional and related to the person of the verb, the fact is that I find the e changed to i in the first person of the past tense in the following examples: "I arrived" -- yammi; "I returned" -- tapini; "I ate" (remote past or preterite) -- tdeucquáji. But it happens anyway, that these changes in verbs to agree with the person concerned are not needed for each has a pronominal prefix attached to it, to wit: nu, a, lo, inat, which correspond to "I," "thou," "he," "we," etc., which undergo certain variations such as: no and ni, lu and li, inné, and I don't remember which others.

However, in negative usage, which is formed with the suffix tde, meaning "no," the word seems to take on a sort of flectional form, but this is to be attributed solely to the desire for euphony. For example: "I see" -- nu huenn; "I do not see" -- nu-huenni-tdé, instead of nuhenntdé; "short" is isset or nisset while "not short" is

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nu yissti tdé, rather than nuissetde; "is he dead?" is yáj iil?, and "he is not dead" is yini tde, instead of yill tdé.

I do not go into further details because I would continually find it necessary to become embroiled in forms about which very little is known as to their differentiations -- and these variations become all the more numerous as the [263] relations which are treated become more complex. Let us take a single example, and that from among the more elementary ones. "Did the Chief (mine) return?" is Yaj tapil-le nucaunía?; "He did not return" -- Tapini-tdé. In this very simple example, why do we have in one instance le, and in the other ni? The interrogative is concerned only with the first part, that is, with yaj. In my opinion it is quite clear that these changes are the result of an aural whim, and I believe that I can almost say that tapil-le is a substitution caused by the nu which follows tapilné, which is in turn a syncopation of tapil-nenná; and so also with tapi ni. Now ab uno disce omnes.

d. Regarding Reflexive Verbs

They seem to form some reflexive verbs by juxtaposing j-lam to the active form. For example: "Pedro killed himself" is Peiló tilonne j-lam. This j-lam translates the Latin met and our own "--self." So the personal pronoun nojlam could be "ego met," that is, "I myself," which would cause it to harmonize more closely with the other pronominal elements. I must make clear here that my references, both here and elsewhere, to Latin are not efforts to establish any sort of analogy whatsoever -- I only do so in an effort to make my report more clear.

e. Regarding Verbs in General

It is worthwhile noting how certain verbs whose meaning has become modified keep to their original root. For example: "to walk" is opil, "to return" is tapil; "to come" is nom, "to arrive" is yom; "to die" is iil, "to kill" is ilón; "to shout, call out, say" is ohn, to speak hon and hon-quié (that is "to speak with") corresponds to our "to converse," which is one more proof, in my opinion,

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of the Indians' quick wit and logical inclination. These expressions could give us the key to the modifying value of certain particles, from which much would be gained regarding the philosophy of language (as in hon-quié) and comparative philology, as in ta-pil, in which t represents repetition of an action -- as retracing one's steps does indeed imply -- and which is found with this meaning in the Araucano language, and, for that matter in ours also as for instance agitar [meaning "to shake" or "agitate"--Translator] from agere, and the Italian seguitare ["To follow"--Translator] which is seguir in Spanish; and there are dozens of other examples.

However, it is by means of postpositions that the vast majority of verbs are formed. We have already given the examples tol-l-ca, "to come from"; tol-l-pe, "to fall from," tol-l-equíote "to fall into," all of which are derived from tol-l, a word of movement. And I am positive that, according to this rule, if I were to say toll-quie (quie is the same as cum -- "with," as in "company") in place of "to accompany" or "to go with," these Indians would understand me. Further examples? "Peter is dying of hunger" is Peilo il-lej nainlo (ej means "with" in an instrumental sense). And in order to [264] convince the reader that ej in this case is not a preposition of nainló, "hunger," let us see the following example: "The Indians are dying of hunger" is Uicquii yil ej-i-én nainló, that is yille-ej-én, in which ej precedes en, a suffix of the plural verb which is, naturally, attached and suffixed to the latter and not prefixed to the noun. It is therefore not a "preposition" as we shall call it when we study this part of speech.

This type of preposition usage, together with the other changes and variations of which we have so often complained, is not the least of the causes which make for confusion and difficulty in the study of verbs. And in actual fact, what activities can escape the possibility of being expressed by a verb which covers the basic idea and a postpositional particle which assigns a relation to it? Very few indeed. And very few also are the words which do not have one or other of these disguised insertions which crop up now here, now there, now somewhere else and in a different guise, according to the aural requirements of the moment, and which flabbergast the hearer and surprise and confuse him with their inexplicable changes and variations.

One of the verbal forms for expressing actions which include the idea of possession is that of placing ya next to the word which

expresses the thing possessed. For example: "woman" is chiecua, "to have a woman (or wife)" is chiecuaya; "fear" is huái', "to be afraid (to have a fear)" is huáya. Another way of indicating possession is as follows: "son" is loss, while "to have sons" is lo lessen; "daughter" is either lo-se or le-ctza, and "to have daughters" is lolessás; "brother" is quiilaj, and "to have brothers" is quiilaliss.

The verb "to be" is not expressed. For example: "I am ugly" is nu-tzi-tdé, which literally means "I goodlooking not."

d. Examples of Verbal Flections

I shall put an end to this very boring matter of the verbs (it has been so for me, I must confess, although I hope it has not for the reader!) by attempting to put together and set down one of the verb conjugations for the indicative mood. I do not guarantee the details -- you already know why -- but I believe that in general it may be accepted as summing up what I know on the subject.

VERB: Ilon -- "to kill."

INDICATIVE MOOD

	Present Tense	Remote Past (Preterite)
Singular:	1. I kill -- nu-ilón	1. I killed -- nu-ilon-náje
	2. Thou killest -- há-ilon	2. Thou killedest -- ha-ilon-náje.
	3. He kills -- l-ilón	3. He killed -- l-ilon-náje or t-ilon-náje

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Plural:		
	1. We kill - inat-ilón-én	1. We killed -- inat-ilonnajién
	2. You kill -- há-ilon-en	2. You killed -- ha-ilonnajién
	3. They kill -- tojéss-ilon-én	3. They killed -- tojéss-ilonnajién.

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IMPERFECT TENSE

Singular: 1. I was killing -- nu-ilonnénna
2. Thou wert killing -- ha-ilonnénna
3. He was killing -- l-ilonnénna

Plural: 1. We were killing -- inat-ilonnénnahén
2. You were killing -- ha-ilonnénnahén
3. They were killing -- tojéss-ilonnénnahén.

PAST PERFECT

Singular: 1. I have killed -- nu-ilonné
2. Thou hast killed -- ha-ilonné
3. He has killed -- le-ilonné
Plural: 1. We have killed -- inat-ilonnehén
2. You have killed -- ha-ilonnehén
3. They have killed -- tojéss-ilonnehén

FUTURE

Singular: 1. I shall kill -- nu-ilón-lá
2. Thou wilt kill -- ha-ilón-lá
3. He will kill -- l-ilón-lá
Plural: 1. We shall kill -- inát-ilon-lá-hen
2. You will kill -- ha-ilon-lá-hen
3. They will kill -- tojéss-ilon-lá-hen.

IMPERATIVE

kill - l-lon.

Let it be understood that the preterite form with náje is used only very rarely, and even less so is the nenná form used.

Do these people have a passive form to their verbs? I don't know. Yet I have noticed that many of the constructions using the passive in the Romance languages are changed about by them

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and rendered into an active form, or at least an intransitive one.

For example: instead of saying "Paul was killed by Pliny," they say "Pliny died because of Paul [sic]" or else "Pliny killed Paul."

I don't think, really, that this necessarily points up an inferiority in their language.

By no means let it be thought that the verbs in this language are easy and simple by virtue of the above conjugation table. It is, in fact, just because they are so jumbled and involved that I am not able to give further moods or tenses, which are so terribly complicated that even now I do not have a firm grasp of their governing rules.

Chapter XIII

Regarding Adverbs

There are a great many adverbs, but those involving time stand out because of the logical manner of their formation which parallels the way in which we form them in our own language. For example: "day" is icuála, which actually means "sun" or "one sun," just as "month" is igüeláj, which literally means "moon"; "beside" [266] is tem-ló; náje, náji or naj mean "past," and also "afterward," in the sense of past time; nenna and na mean "present, now" -- so (quite logically) "today" is icuálanná; that is "present sun"; Spanish mañana is icuála and also quiicuála, in the same way that in Spanish mañana means both "morning" and "tomorrow"; "yesterday" is icuálannáje, that is "the past sun"; "the day before yesterday is icuála el-láje, which means -- since el means "other" and láje is the same as náje -- "the other past sun." Because of some change or harmonious feeling or custom in the language, "the day after tomorrow" is tem-lo icuála, which signifies "beside tomorrow." It is curious that tem-ló is prefixed to icuála to express the idea of a day later and yet náje is suffixed when expressing the idea of a day earlier. Quirks of the language apparently, and yet they must answer to some etymological, not to say philosophical, reason, which resides in their changed position.

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What further attracts my attention is the following: Instead of our "night" they use a word which means "earth," that is, hunát hunná, just as for "day" they make use of their word for "sun," as if they had intended to oppose one to the other. It may not be too farfetched to see in this a sort of philosophy in which the earth and the sun represent two opposite principles: darkness and light, good and evil. I, however, have not been able to perceive any such philosophy in their ideology, although it is true that something of this sort -- somewhat materialized -- is to be found in their religion, as we have had occasion to see in an earlier section of this treatise.

And is this business of using the sun, or light, to express the idea of time not an intellectual parallel or approach to the Aryan, for from the Sanscrit dyu, that is "light" [Spanish luz--Translator] came the Latin dies, the Spanish día, and the Italian di, all of which mean "day" or "day's effort."

Meanwhile, in order to say "this afternoon" they say hunná and quiá-hunná, and for "last night," hunná-tzi-nná, keeping thus to the same form and sequence followed in the order of words which we saw in "today," "tomorrow," etc.

Furthermore, their expression for "sky" is ppe-lé, which must 192 be translated as "that which is above," from ppé, "above" and lé 821 which is a contraction of lél-lé or c-lel-lé, a patronimic word which is used to express the concept of origin, provenience, father-land, etc.

It is said that savages have no abstract ideas, but I ask, is the 192 idea of "always" or "never" abstract or not? Without waiting for an 196 answer I say that these Indians in question have the word inne-mid which expresses "never," and c-lam-mej for "always," which they derive, respectively, from innem -- "more" (Italian mai, Latin umquam) and the negative d; and from j-lam, meaning "same" plus the postposition ej.

It may be objected these are expressions made up of words which separately mean something more limited, which is valid as far as the objection goes. The French, let it be remembered [267] say toujours, "all the days," with the meaning of "always" and thus express an idea which is indefinite, or rather infinite, by means of a word which of itself has a limited meaning as is the case with "day." The fact of the matter is that a given abstraction is not

limited to the words used to convey it but hinges rather on the intention behind it. If this were not so what could one say in defense of the English word "always"?

While we are on this subject let me mention that the particles naje and nenná -- the latter sometimes missing its first syllable, sometimes its last and shifting from i to e [sic] -- are used to make two verb tenses. The first, that is naje, being employed for the remote past or preterite and the other for the past perfect. For example: "to return" is tapil; "he returned" is tapil láje; "he has returned" is tapil-lé (the second l in both cases is the same as n, as was explained above in the treatment of icuála-el-láje).

In place of "midday" or "noon" they say icuála icni, which, as far as I can make out means "high sun" or "up above sun"; and in order to convey the idea of "midnight" they say hunnat-quiú-nej, which I take to mean "low earth" or "underneath earth." For "it is early" they say inataj; and for "it is late," hunáj.

They have a syllable, tde, or dthé, or ntdé, which is the basic element for a great number of adverbs of place and of time. For example: "why?" is atdyécque; "where?" is tdené; "whence?" is dtel che; "how?" is atde-tzé; "how much?" is tde-hoté; "when?" is tdé-naj-hote. Hoté alone means "as," and naj expresses the further meaning that the question refers to a somewhat remote period in the past. Let it be noted that wherever a precedes it usually refers to "thou," since the question is asked of a second person. This goes to show how important it is to know the circumstances of time (tense) and person to which the questions refer, when writing the answers.

I am afraid that I shall bore the reader with this mass of data on the Mataco language, and yet I do not know, for the life of me how to keep from telling that little which I have been able to learn of it and gather in the limited free time allowed me by my professional work and which usually comes only in the very late hours of the night. If I make digressions to keep the reader from becoming tired I fear that I shall write too lengthily, and if I make no digressions and write a straight report I fear to be too dry and boring.... Certainly I know not which way to turn. Who will suggest some bright idea which will afford escape from this slough? No one?

can easily imagine then the horrible confusion confronting the neophyte who is faced with a pile of expressions belonging to a completely new and strange language in which a given word seems to change and be different every time it is used, and for no apparent reason. I for my part confess that for a long time I was unable to understand it and even now I own that I have been able to track down only very few of the rules which govern these changes and which lie hidden among the hundreds of sentences which I have written down.

For example: cue is equivalent to "with"; "we" is, in its abbreviated form nu hén; "with us" is nu cue hén.

Of course, the problem would not be difficult if one could ask an Indian a question regarding an isolated word and he were able to answer in an absolute way. But the Indian, more times than not, has need always to refer the word to some thing. Thus, when one asks him how one says "foot" in his language he will answer nuccoló if he touches his own foot; accolo if he touches the questioner's foot; toccolo if he touches the foot of some third person. Then there is the confusing problem of [269] different construction. For example: in the above mentioned case of nuccuenen, if one asks the interpreter which is the part which means "with" and which the part corresponding to "us" he will answer (if he is intelligent and knows the language) quite naively: nuc means "with," and cuehen is "us" -- precisely the opposite to what is actually the case.

So it is that there is nothing for it but to go forward slowly and step by step, from the known to the unknown, inquiring first after single words, then after simple, clear sentences, then after less simple but still clear ones, and finally, by dint of repeating the same sentence with slight changes of one word or some one of its parts we shall in all probability, manage, by a simple process of elimination, to arrive at the meaning of each word. And yet even this is not enough for, owing to the properties inherent in this language which I have pointed out elsewhere, owing to the great intellectual distance between the interlocutors, and to the different points of view to which they hold because of mutual ignorance, the wretched student suddenly finds himself face to face with an old word in a new disguise, not knowing why or how or when the change came about and wondering which of the two forms is the

correct or original or basic one. His first reaction is to redouble his efforts and multiply his questions, and thus very often he only redoubles his confusion until he finally ends up by producing a veritable Babel. . . . 192 193

And since we have mentioned Babel, I must remark that the Vielas [sic] Indians translate the word "speak" by the term mbabelon.

But now let us return to our prepositions. It is often said that these prepositions modify the meaning of verbs, but it would be closer to the truth to say that they merely complement them. For example: Tol-l carries with it the idea of movement. When used alone it may mean "to sprout": thus "the grass sprouts" is expressed thus: "grass, tol-l. With the addition of ca at the end it means "to come from," and if ppé is added it means "to fall." Other words are not lacking which express the same thing, however if we want to use tol-l then these particles, which are used as postpositions, must be placed next to the nouns.

It might be supposed, when these prepositions are suffixed to verbs, that they are really prefixes of the objective case; but in spite of the fact that there are some prepositions which are prepositions in every sense of the word, nevertheless, in the above cases they act postpositionally even with verbs, because they modify the latters' endings in accord with their sound, because the verbs thus modified can be used alone -- for other words can be inserted between it (together with its postposition) and the objective case -- which demonstrates that the postposition is attached to the verb.

The main particles, or at least the one which I judge to be so, and which act as do our prepositions are: eckiá -- "until"; tamennej -- "because of"; appé, pé or ppé -- "on top of"; (h)icquió -- "below"; cue, quié, ycque, ecque, ej -- "with" (these are probably one and the same, but modified for reasons of euphony); uuith, uuitd and c-loya, which also [270] mean "with" and are prefixed and are rather to be considered copulative conjunctions; op, ob, "hot," hlot -- "for," and which I have only come across with the meaning of "because," for example: op-toj -- "because" ("for this"); op-qui-lá -- "what for?", while in order to say "why?" they use atddeyéque? which is made up of atde meaning "what" or "how" and yécque -- "with." There is also the postposition ei which is

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like the Italian da and the French chez, and is used for movement to or from a place (the latter often being omitted) and is placed in diverse positions. This ei or iei is part of a most elegant verbal expression: miei, meaning "fetch," composed of móh or mmóh which means "go" and ei (the whole having undergone one of the numerous shifts which are so common to this language and used to drive me to desperation). For example: Instead of saying "go and bring me fire" (itoj) they say miéi-itoj, which is "fetch me fire." At first, and even after I had been working on the language for some time, I thought it was a flection.

Another important postposition is ca which means "of" (genitive and ablative) and is suffixed to both verbs and nouns. With these latter it forms a sort of genitive which I find is used somewhat rarely and then only with proper nouns. With personal pronouns it forms the possessives "my," "thy," "his," which in this tongue are genitive -- if they can be called such -- and follow the same rule as genitives do in Italian in which one may just as readily say "mine" as "of me." So from nu (which is a syncopated form of nojlam -- "I") they derive nujcá -- "my"; ah-ca -- "your," luh-cá -- "his," "of him."

There are other postpositions also: cquí, "within"; lája, which means "without" and is a prefix, and which is a word of negation, for I do not find it prefixed to any words other than those ending in a way which indicates denied possession. For instance, "wifeless" is lája chequó yá, that is "not married."

There are so many others that I cannot possibly recall them all.

The words that express our "with" (ecq, yc-que) lead me to believe that some postpositions govern certain cases and that the varied endings of the latter cause the apparent change in the prefix. For example, "me" is nuya; "with me" is nuyécque -- from which one can easily conclude that a shift has taken place from nuya yécque. And does not the same thing happen in Italian when instead of saying con lo, con la, con li, we say col-lo, col-la, col-li, and in place of di-lo, di-la we say del-lo, del-la?

suffixing of artificial particles in the interrogative: chu at the end of verbs, and taj at the end of nouns.

For example: "Do you want?" is munanqui? and "water" (accusative) is yacuta. If one were to ask: "Do you want water?", this would be munanquichu yacuta?; "you are called" is sutiqui, and "how" is ima. In order to ask "How (what) are you called?" one must say imataj sutiiqui, one sound -- if spoken -- or calligraphic symbol -- if written -- being economized.

Let it be noted that in Quichua all particles are suffixed, be they conjunctions, prepositions, interrogatives, declensions. This makes of it an exceptionally [sic] typical language.

Chapter XV

Regarding Conjunctions

I have not found a single disjunctive conjunction such as "or," "neither," etc. Instead of "or" they appear to use "if not," and in place of "neither" they seem to repeat the verb. For example, they say "Give me water if there is no wine" instead of "give me [273] water or wine." And also: "I have no water, I have no wine" instead of "I have neither water nor wine."

Conversely, they have many words to express copulative conjunctions such as "and," "also," etc., all of which they prefix, as we do. The more important of this type of conjunction are, it seems to me: uuith or uuitd and c-loya which they use for our "with," as has already been seen, and utcuei, isiqiei, tdéui, which correspond to our [blank left here, but probably "and" was intended--Translator].

I notice that tdéui is used especially in interrogative phrases such as: "I am leaving, and you?" -- Nu-ycque, tdeui am? They have the conditional conjunction "if," which is quiá or cquiá. When a conditional proposition is placed before the main proposition, the latter is joined to uuitd, just as so is used after wenn in German, or cosi in Italian. For example: "If you do not want to, let me know" is cquia ("you do not want to") uuitd ("let me know").

193 From the most cursory examination of the Mataco or Mataguayo, or Nocten tongue it is evident that it is a language which prefixes its pronominal particles, while the Lule has just as strong a bent towards suffixing them.

This fact alone is sufficient to separate Mataco from Lule with a barrier which is not to be bridged by Father Machoni's brief and indirect reference. This does not mean that I deny that Mataco and Lule may share common words—these analogies will be noted later—but the grammatical mechanism and the pronouns themselves point in absolutely opposite directions.

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Following the classification which we have been setting down in this study, Mataco corresponds to the Atlantic type insofar as the position of affixes is concerned, although it is my impression that it leans more closely towards the Moja branch than towards the Guaraní, in spite of the greater immediacy of the latter.

Before proceeding further let us examine the arguments on which Machoni rests his hypothesis that the Tonocoté of Techo and others is really Lule:

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In the first place the Lule language is not widespread but limited to the five nations: Lule, Isistiné, Toquistiné, Oristiné (1)

> 1. The Missionaries of whom Hervas made enquiries deny that there be Oristinés.

and Tonocoté. The Tonocotés numbered 60,000 souls. (Machoni's prologue.)

Secondly, the Tonocotés in the XVII century lived near Concepción del Bermejo and were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena and Anasco. These Indians taking offense at the Spaniards, went off to the banks of the Yabebirí and Pilcomayo Rivers. Ibid.

Thirdly the Lules, Isistinés, Toquistines and Oristinés were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena, Monroy and Viana in 1589 and visited by Saint Francisco Solano. Ibid.

In the fourth place the Isistinés, Toquistinés and Oristinés fled to the Chaco and there remained for over a hundred years until in 1710 they came before don Esteban de Urizar y Arespacochaga who placed them in the Valbuena and Miraflores reservations; Father Machoni was with them for 9 years. [617]

able to extract a few rules from them after having written them 124
down as it seemed to me that they sounded.

One day the son of a chief stopped by and I began to ask 124
him the names of all the parts of his body. Naked as he was there 193
was no possibility of confusing these parts of the body with the clothing associated with them.

Hardly had he finished when I perceived that each one of those fifteen or twenty words began, without exception, with nu or no, the u and the o substituting each other frequently, the difference in sound being hardly perceptible.

"Well I'll be...!" I said to myself. This nu is either an article or a relating particle, for it is not conceivable that so many words have the same root. It didn't seem likely to me that it was an article, but nevertheless I remembered that when I was a boy and I was asked by someone to name the parts of my face I used to answer using the article, and saying -- for example: "the mouth, the eye," etc. Why could these Indians not be just as childish as I?

I very soon had my doubts resolved. I asked him the same questions with reference to my own body, and he repeated the words he had given me, but changing the nu to a, and sometimes a few of the other letters which followed after the nu. It was as though a bolt of lightning had suddenly illumined my understanding -- but doubt returning, and being very desirous to get to the bottom of this problem, I took advantage of the occasion of my having caught a chimango [kite-like bird--Translator] and asked the same questions about the various parts of its body. In the answers I was given, many of the words began with lu or lo, but remained otherwise pretty much the same as those pertaining to man, minus that famous nu or a.

The following conclusion, almost concrete and tangible in 193
its clarity, flashed before me: So the Matacos prefix a variable particle to their radical words, and this particle probably expresses a relationship. But what relationship?...I searched again through my notes, especially among the phrases and sentences and found that on every occasion when reference was made to the person who was talking the term began [235] with nu; if reference was to the person spoken to, with a, and if to a third person, then with lu or lo.

It was a revelation to me. It was a key which opened up 193 ● for me the secret of a large stage upon which were to be found the explanations of the meaning of a great number of words; it was the compass which allowed me to find the right way as I traversed the labyrinth of phrases.

What a pleasurable experience that was!

These particles are not prefixed only to nouns, but also to verbs, and to adjectives when need arises. They even go so far as to overuse them pleonastically, as we so often do with certain particles in relaxed conversation; a phenomenon which is even more pronounced in untutored usage.

Following hard upon this discovery and attempting to find out something further regarding the way these particles were used, I came upon something which confirmed my previous induction: nu is a syncopation of nuj-ca, which means "mine"; a is a syncopation of aj-ca, meaning "yours"; and lu is a shortened form of luj-co, meaning "his," "of him." This is when these particles are prefixed to nouns. When prefixed to verbs they may be considered, respectively, as syncopations of noj-c-lam, signifying "I" ' am or ham, meaning "you"; and lutzi or toj-lutzi, meaning "he" or "that one." With verbs, toj is preferred to lu, and means "this one" when isolated, while toj-sam and toj-lani mean "that one," and toj-licne and toj-lei-tzi mean "that one yonder."

Is this inter-compatibility between personal pronoun, personal adjective and particle indicating personal relation not beautiful and at the same time simple and useful?

Was it possible that such a language could have lacked rules? All this built up my interest and egged me on to further efforts.

Accustomed as we are in our language to find, as a general rule, the root and the unchangeable part of words at the beginning, the finding of the very opposite here was enough to drive one mad until some canon could be found which would explain matters. This being so, the following rule of thumb ought always to be followed when attempting to study a language which does not have a written grammar: forget every rule which holds for one's own language -- if this is not done it will be as difficult to hit upon the right solution as it is to recognize a person who is wearing a mask.

constructions. In what way can it be said that they are behind other languages? 192 196

[244] Thus for Venus they employ the same verbal image as we and the Latins do, that is lucero ["morning star"--Translator] ijuála-hu, "mother of the day"; similarly they call the wrist "mother of the hand," tcué-huo; the abispa tic-lan [Enigmatic. The closest I can get to any logical meaning is "the tic-lan wasp," which is not helpful at all--Translator] they call "mother of the tic-lan, tic-lán-huu; and the beating of the pulse is "little heart," tdul-lecuáj.

The Mataco language may be lacking in certain particular sounds (articulations) but, on the other hand, it has a superfluity of other particular sounds (articulations). Among these latter the following stand out: quía, quié, quií, quío, quíu, and cquiá, and so forth, which together with others of similar sound are so frequent as to leave one in some doubt as to whether the language is not made up of the same syllable repeated a thousand times over in the same sense. We know already that quiá, quié etc. can change places with tzá, tzé and so forth, or with chiá, chié, etc., or with tchiá, tchié, etc. Furthermore the inversion of the constituent elements of a word is frequent, for example: "wide" is quü-tzaj-hu and also i-tzaj-quié -- it can therefore be readily understood to what extent Indian oratory can spread itself out and expand, as far as form goes, without really saying anything different. This sort of thing must be very generalized. General Mansilla in his outstanding book Una expedición a los Indios Ranqueles ["An expedition to the Ranquel Indians"--Translator] tells of having experienced this Indian fondness for repetitiveness, and I did also among the Tobas when we were harangued for half an hour and were really only told the same thing in several different ways according to Faustino the interpreter. 195 192 193

In their formation of compound words they follow the English and German usage; for example: "gloves," which are handschuhe in German, that is "hand shoes," are cqüéí-pbut among the Indians, that is "hand coverers." The same thing happens in negative sentences; example: "I do not see," is Ich sehe nicht in German and nu-ihenni-tde in Mataco, that is, "I see not," which is also precisely the manner of expression of the inhabitants of the areas surrounding Milan.

Chapter V

Augmentatives and Diminutives

Another thing which almost drove me to insanity was the nomenclature of the domestic animals which were introduced to America from Europe at the time of the discovery or conquest.

It is well known that when new things are introduced into previously unopened areas the names of these things are also introduced. It is also known that this fact has been of inestimable value, not only to philologists but also to ethnographers, that is, to those who deal with and study the distribution and description of the earth's peoples.

Very well then, -- it would happen that when I asked for the local names for horse, cow, sheep, etc., the Indians would answer with names which were absolutely different from the Spanish names.

Even now I get an urge to laugh when I remember the tortures to which I submitted the Mataco words in order to try to boil them down, by dint of hypothetical changes and shifts, to their Spanish roots.

I was fortunate enough one day to catch two pigeons in a trap.

We had on board with us a beautiful bulldog. In Mataco the word for dog is sinój, and we had named our dog Palomo ["pigeon"--Translator], which the Matacos [246] literally translated into their own language as ucquinataj. One day it happened that an Indian, on patting the dog, said, by way of expressing his admiration: Sinoj-tá́j! instead of Sinoj or Ucquinatá́j. I started then to realize that the particle taj expressed size of superiority, that it was a loose or floating affix, and that it could be added to or taken from other words in order to modify their meaning. I flew to my note books, leafed through the pages, ran through my lists of nouns, added taj to those which did not have it, and in an instant there sprang up before my eyes, to my immense satisfaction, the true, beautiful, philosophic, scientific etymologies of my quiuuasse-tá́j, "cow"; yelatá́j, horse; chí́onataj, "sheep"; quiuasset, "deer"; yelá́j, "tapir"; chionaj, "doe" -- with the famous taj which enlarges, ennobles and stretches them and declares them to be superior.

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So it was that it suddenly dawned on me that in those words, which I had jotted down in their scores, and which ended in taj, I must eliminate that syllable, as also the famous uu or a or la, and tune my ear and sharpen my eye for the sounds which were basic and essential to each word. At the same time that I started to see this more clearly, I began to discover the genesis and the laws governing the word changes.

From there on a new region began to open up for me into which I readily and happily entered.

I hope that the reader will not become scandalized at this sort of enthusiasm which he may perceive in me. In my position he might well have experienced the same thing, for man is a slave to circumstances -- any Minister of State who becomes for a while a private soldier will take pleasure in noticing the look of approval from his corporal for a well executed "present arms"; as will the philosopher when praised by his lady for having helped her to untangle her skein of wool.

So how could a nobody such as I not feel pleasure on seeing, in his own hands, so to speak, a language which had been considered impoverished and of no account, take shape and flower into a methodical and elegant tongue?

Well,anyway -- these Matacos have an augmentative particle: taj, which is used to indicate physical, "moral" and descriptive qualities. So from ícnú, man, they form ícnú-taj, large man, from inót, "water," they form inót-táj "fire water" or brandy, and from ahló, pole or rod, they form ahlotáj-yacaré, "almost pole" or "nearly pole."

As a diminutive they sometimes use the particle quuáj and quiáj; for example: from colo, foot, they derive coló-quuáj, little foot; from cuéi, hand, they make cuéi-quiáj, little hand. They also use this latter term to indicate a person who is either lacking a hand -- or the whole arm -- or has a severe malformation in it. [The word "manco" in Spanish means any one of these--Translator.] So a chief called Manco in Spanish -- he actually lacked a hand -- was called in Mataco Cuéi-quuáj. This diminutive particle is also added to pronouns, a thing which cannot be done in Italian but can in Spanish, to wit: esa - esita ["That (feminine) one" -- "that little (feminine) one"--Translator] --which is very frequently used by country people.

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These suffixes taj and quuaj and quiaj, although they are well defined particles, may nevertheless, and probably ought to, be considered as [247] inflections, for they mean nothing by themselves and furthermore it is they which are declined and not the words to which they are attached (1). And it is worth noting that

1. I find in my notes that taj is sometimes a shortened form of oitaj, meaning "almost."

in the matter of declension they follow a rule quite contrary to the one used for the suffixes corresponding to demonstrative pronouns; the same phenomenon which is encountered in French and Italian diminutives. Taj and quiaj, of which the plurals are tass and quiäss, divide and separate as do the demonstratives, for example: "box of matches" is itoj-ʾhi-cuass, that is "fire-box-little"; a case of incorporation (2).

2. In Mataco, "matches" is translated as "little fires," itoj-huaj (euphonic h in place of c), thus following our usage even in this detail.

Finally, it seems that they habitually place an i in front of a foreign word. For example the Spanish ñato ["snub nose"--Translator] becomes iñato, in which they coincide with the Mocoví Indians. It may be just a simple euphonic exigency.

Chapter VI

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Some curious cases of onomatopoea and sound similarities.

Only very few words in this Indian language can be considered onomatopoetic, that is, imitative of the sounds they express. Which phenomenon of sound imitation is considered by some to be the origin of human language, developed later by man's intelligence.

To shout or yell is óhn; lightning is jlépp; dumb or mute is huó-huó; cough is cacojtáss; cricket is li-tzil; parrot is quie-quié

Chapter VII

Gender, Number, case, syncopation. Article?

a. Gender

It does not seem to me that the nouns have gender -- only in pronouns and in demonstrative adjectives are there to be found certain changes which make me suspect a gender differentiation. Yet this goes no further than the merest suspicion.

Withal, they do suffix the ending tzináˊ to the names of female animals, which means "female," and, when used alone and not attached to another word, means "woman"; for example, "mare" is yelaiáˊj-tzináˊ. In order to indicate a male animal they usually add asnáˊj, which actually means "male."

b. Number

I was so sure that these inhabitants of the Chaco must possess a plural formed by the joining or placing in close proximity of some word indicative of the concept of plurality, such as "much" or some other like word, that I was for ever in search of it. Actually there was nothing unnatural about such an idea -- the Guaraní Indians do in fact use such a linguistic device, heta, which placed beside a singular immediately imparts plurality to it; the Quichuas also do likewise by suffixing cuna, and these two nations of Indians are or were neighbors of the Matacos. Many other peoples use the self same artifice which is called agglutination; the Akka of Africa do so too.

It seemed therefore quite natural that the smaller should follow in the footsteps of the larger. Furthermore, is it not often stated that agglutination is common to the less advanced languages?

[249] It is a fact that in this case also it would seem as if the peoples who utilize this recourse are the least advanced -- actually this is very far from the truth.

In short, every language system has its weak points, which nevertheless do not detract from their basic usefulness among those who utilize it. It was therefore proper for me to accept this

linguistic canon as a sort of maxim.

However, the answers to my questions in which plurals were used were anything but satisfactory. Sometimes the plural of a word would end in one way, then another plural would end differently, and in all plurals there could be inserted a ntocq, meaning "much." What is more, just as all the rest of the expression varied, so also did one remain in the dark regarding the element connoting plurality. I would formulate my questions with numbers and the doubt still remained. For example: "Two horses?" I would ask, and the answer would come "horses two"; "two men?" "two icnú, icnul, or icnuíl." They appeared to be endings with different variations due to changes in pronunciation rather than to any other cause.

I repeat all this because it may be of some service to any of the many travelers who enjoy spending time among savages, either in Africa or in America. If they are not already too proud of their own knowledge and acumen it may stand them in good stead.

Meanwhile, I was surprised to gather that "we" and "you" [vosotros is 2nd person plural in familiar address--Translator] were formed directly from the singulars "I" and "thou" [tú, is 2nd person singular in familiar address--Translator] by means of the same affix. Thus, from noj-lám, meaning "I," noj-lám-il, "we," is derived; from am -- meaning "thou," they form ám-il, meaning "you" [2nd person plural--Translator] -- but in this case it was a matter only of those pronouns in which there are many rule exceptions. Nevertheless this very thing, by calling my attention to a given case, gave me the key to the riddle.

These Matacos not only have a plural which they form with ntocq -- "much," but also possess others which are arrived at in different ways and by means of assorted inflections. To sum up, they have divers declensions which are exclusive of each other and which hold, in a general way, to the following rules:

Words ending in either o or velar e add i to make the plural. Thus colo, meaning "foot," becomes coloi, "feet"; huentié, "little bird," becomes huentiéi, "little birds." Words ending in aj change j to ss -- in this category fall all the augmentatives ending in taj and all diminutives ending in quiaj, for

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example: igüela -- "moon" or "month," becomes igüelass, "months"; yelataj -- "horse," becomes yelatass, "horses." Words ending in u take an l, which is pronounced by pressing part of the tongue against the palate and sounds like il, for example: cannú, meaning needle, becomes cannúl, almost cannuil, "needles." Words ending in t, oj and other letters take ess for the plural; thus: yápset, "fish," becomes yápsetéss, "fishes"; tdoj, "hide or skin," becomes tdojess, "hides." Words ending in l often add ess [sic.], sometimes losing the final l in the process; example: tzel, "belly," [250] tzeliss, "bellies"; yel meaning "a sick person" becomes yiss (or yéliss), "sick persons" -- this last being a fine example of shift.

Many exceptions have their place here too, of course, and probably other rules, but they are not included here so as to avoid becoming burdensome.

I am almost willing to believe that they have a dual approach to plurality as have the Araucano and Guaraní Indians, and the Greeks in Europe, but I cannot give any real assurance of it. To this effect I site from my notes: cqüéí -- the hand, cquéyai, both hands; noj-lamil -- we, noj-lamáss, we two; amil you [2nd person plural familiar --Translator], amass, you two. I repeat, however, that I am not sure but that it is a duplicated plural form.

As far as numerals go they can use, or not, as they see fit, a plural for following nouns, in which case use of a plural is, so to speak, redundant. Adjectives they do not pluralize, and they place them before nouns.

c. Case

I have not come across enough examples to allow me to affirm that this language has case declension unless one wishes to construe as such the genitive suffix ca. Here is an example of the use of this suffix: Peilo-ca-Uicquii, which means "Pedro's people." Their use of postpositions (corresponding to our prepositions) can be considered as cases.

In spite of this I must give fair warning that the personal pronouns "I" and "thou," at least in the singular, have case declension, while toj, meaning "this one" seems only to have an accusative toja.

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The declension of those pronouns which I have been able to glean are as follows:

Singular	Singular
Nom. I: nojlam, nu, no'ni.	Nom. Thou: am, or ham, and a
Gen. of me: noj-ca	Gen. Of thee: aj-cá
Dat. To me: nú-ho	Dat. To thee: ám-u or hám-u
Ac. Me: nuy-a or nu	Ac. Thee: ám-a and a-i
Ablat. With me: nuy-ej	Ablat. With thee: ám-ej or ám-quie.

Plural	Plural
Nom. We: noj, lam-il, na or inát	Nom. You [familiar]: am-il or a
Nom. [sic.] Us: noj, lam-áss and in-namáss	Nom. [sic.] You [familiar]: am-ass, or á

It is my opinion that the ending l and il must be some degeneration of the word el, which means "other" and which was originally used to express the plural, which plural is therefore [251] nothing else than a forgotten agglutinative form which has evolved by means of progressive alterations.

d. Syncopation

Syncopation is very common in this language, doubtless for reasons of euphony, but the alteration and confusion it brings about in words give rise to many errors and make the study of the language very difficult. For example: "Do you love me?" is Yajámín nuya, which is a shortened form of yaj-a-hemin nuya. "I do not love you" is Namahemin, which comes from Nu-am-a-hemin. I myself, shortly before writing these lines, thought that nam must mean "no," which then threw me into confusion because in this present example I could not find the particle nu,

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expressive of the first person. Only after having checked and compared numerous sentences were my eyes opened to the real facts.

Chapter VIII

Regarding Negative Forms

The Mataco language contains a great many negatives which occupy various positions. It is curious to note their strange similarity to the Indian languages of North America spoken by nations which one would never have supposed to be related at all.

The most common of these negatives is ka, meaning "no," which can be used alone and also prefixed to adjectives thus contradicting the meaning of the word; for example: matt means "it is true," while ka-matt means "it is false." It is strange indeed that the Akkas, those so-called pygmies of Africa have this same word in their language with the same meaning "no," according to the grammatical essay of Abbot Beltrame of Verona.

Another negative particle is tdé, which is always suffixed, for example: mát -- "true"; matti-tdé, "false."

Note the extra i which is added to soften the word. These additions and eliminations of stray letters cause great difficulty and make the student of this language lose his way at every turn, despairing of ever getting to the end of his problems. Let us look at another example: nu-huen means "I have," hue-ni-tde, "I have not."

Then there is am, which is prefixed to verbs, as for example: n'am-huen, which signifies "I do not have." There also is yaj, which is both interrogative and imperative and is prefixed to verbs; it is the ne of the Latins, except for its position. Another negative particle is laja, which also means "without." Examples of the foregoing are: "Don't kill me," yaj-lon-nu; "Do you love me?", Yaj-a-hemin-nuya? "Widow" is laja-chiécuó-ya, that is, "husbandless one."

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Chapter IX

Regarding Adjectives

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a. Their usage

I have now before me the tangled problem of adjectives, comparatives, superlatives, numerals, and verb flections. There is no reason to prefer one to another and so I start with the one first mentioned.

One would think that adjectives ought to be like so many isolated plant stems, growing in such a way that a mere touch of the hand would be sufficient to turn them aside in order to pass easily by. Such is not the case. There are some which have their roots and even their branches so intertwined and enmeshed that one has need of an axe to untangle them.

There are a good many adjectives which are so rooted as to make it impossible to ascertain their beginning and their end -- in fact, most of the Mataco adjectives fall into this category. There are others, though, the geneology of which is quite evident. Among these are the possessives, which are formed from pronominal roots to which the particle ca, meaning "of," (also used as a genitive postposition) and co, which must be considered as a modification of ca, has been attached. In addition to ca and co they also use lo with the same possessives, especially, or so it seems to me, with "of mine," "of thine"; thus "of mine" (nuj) is nuj-ca, nuj-co, and nuj-lo; while "of thine" is ac-co and al-lo; and "whose?" ("of whom?") is atdec-lo.

Another way of forming these adjectives is with the addition of tzaj. For example: "fear" is uáí or huái and "fearful" is huain-tzaj. Another possibility is with ya, but this is really more like a present participle. Example: nu-huai-ya, means "I fearful," "that I am afraid"; acchecuoya means "that you have a wife" or "that you have a husband."

Yet another way is to place the postposition ej beside the noun. Example: "hunger" is na-in-ló; while "hungry one" is na-in lo nej, "now" is cquiá, (which literally means "fresh" or "new") and "of now," "as of now" is cquiá-yej.

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And while on this subject of adjectives it is worth remarking that practically all those which express the opposite of some quality, usually of a good quality, are made up of the adjective denoting that quality plus a negative particle which either precedes or follows it. Thus, for example: "true" is matt, and "false," ka-matt or mattildé, that is to say "not true." "Good" and "pretty" or "nice" are hiss and tzî, while "ugly" is kat-zía and tzitdé; "far" is tocuery, "near," tocuei-tde, which can also be expressed by ca-tu-ta, in which catú means "elbow" and by analogy "curve," "around the corner," and so forth.

These negative particles are also used with nouns. For example: [253] "remedy" or "cure" is ckia, while poison is ka-ckía ("no remedy," "no cure"). Do we not find the same type of usage in our own languages when we say "uncertain" for "not certain" and "discourteous" for "not courteous"?

One might say, however, that these Indians lack certain refinements of which our language can boast and which tend to soften certain expressions, as for instance the subtle distinction between "false" and "not true," "far" and "not near."

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Be that as it may, they still are not lacking in other distinctions, such as that existing between "stranger" and "foreigner." The former they call ajlu-taj-jlé-lé, which means "outsider," and the latter they call ic-quiomjlé-lé, that is, "he from below." And so he is, for from the Mataco point of view foreigners live "below," downriver and off past Paraguay. Upstream from them live the whites, whom they call Chihuéle.

Where did they get this word Chihuéle? Has it something to do with color? "White" is in their language pelaj, and "yellow," yaccatdé, that is, "not black," which proves that the opposite of black is for them yellow. Surely they do not consider us green or blue, however much their eyes may suffer from Daltonism. Can it be that they look upon us as red? This cannot be so either for red is icquiótt, which is a far cry from Chihuéle.

The actual fact is that Chihuéle means "good looking men."

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Let us study this. Chí, as we have already stated, is the same as tzí, and also the same as quí. Now tzi is a root found in ka-tzi-a and in tzitdé which mean "not good" (or "not nice") and "good not" (or "nice not"). Furthermore it is to be found in tzilataj or chilataj, meaning "good," "nice." (The local whites, by the way, mispronounce the first part of this word and say chilátta). Chilatáj is made up, in the first place, of táj which is an augmentative particle, and Chíla. In the word Chíla, the la is a particle which, as was seen in the section treating lo, ca and co, if suffixed to the root has an adjective-forming function. So it is that Chí is the root giving the basic meaning to Chílataj. Chilataj, however, means "good," "nice" to a superlative degree, so that chi is indicative of "beauty."

We have seen that c-lelé is a word which means "which is of." Now, there can be no difficulty in accepting, for a language such as this one which sacrifices so many nuances of sound, that c-lelé has become modified and changed into güele or huéle by degeneration or because of some other shift the laws of which have not yet been discovered. Therefore Chihuéle is the same as Chic-léle, which means "those who are of the good (or nice, or goodlooking) ones," that is "The Goodlooking Ones."

I hope I may be forgiven for taking pleasure in an etymology which allows me to participate in, (although I do not deserve to) and be counted as possessing one of those four qualities declared by the Greek philosopher as indispensable for happiness, to wit: comfort, true friends, love of music and good looks [254] or to be considered so, which amounts to the same thing for all practical purposes.

Now amongst these Indians, even if one is somewhat ugly, one must yet, by comparison seem almost goodlooking, which is great -- are not these word forms therefore rational? They reveal a process of word formation by agglutination.

b. Regarding comparatives

In order to form the comparatives they use homo ehom, which means "more," together with taj, which expresses superiority.

These two words in a comparison are not joined by any equivalent to our "than" [In Spanish comparatives are formed with de or que; the foregoing "than" does not fully translate these terms--Translator.], such as in the following example: "Peter is a better boy than Paul," because they, in this case, would also say, by means of a circumlocution: "Peter is a better boy than Paul is not." This is a somewhat strange construction, but I find that it crops up repeatedly in my notes. Very often the particle ya follows the comparative, which leads me to believe that there are other comparative forms, although I have not discovered them as yet.

c. Regarding the Superlative

To form the superlative they habitually use ntócq which means "much," as is the custom in so many other tongues. They sometimes lengthen the sound of a syllable. For example: "far" is tocuéy; "very far" is tocuéey, the word being accompanied by appropriate gestures. This is also customary amongst the Araucanos and we ourselves use it in certain cases. It is quite natural and logical.

Another way of arriving at a superlative construction is by affixing a to the positive -- for instance: the comparative of the Indian word "his," which means "nice, pretty," is ha-is, "very pretty, very nice"; tocuéy, far, becomes a-tocuéy, very far.

As I have already said they have an augmentative taj and a diminutive quiaj or cuaj, particles which are suffixed and which are declinable while the noun to which they are attached remains unalterable -- their declension consists in changing j to ss for the plural.

In order to say "less" they use yaj-lom, which is the same as yaj-lehom, that is "no more," made up of the particle le plus hom; another example of agglutination, common in this type of adjective. This language is apparently extraordinarily logical, and once having started out in a given direction persists in it to the end. The problem then, in the first place, is to understand this construction, and then to keep from losing sight of it in its many twists and turns. [255]

Indians manage by means of a similar artifice, at least with some of their numerals such as "ten" or "twenty" in place of which they say "two hands" and "two hands and two feet." And it is probable that, should we analyze the etymologies of numerals among other Indians and other nations, we would find something similar. What shall we say of Roman numerals? Do they not represent as many fingers as are needed to count up to three, and a whole hand for five (V) and a hand minus a finger for four (IV), and two superimposed hands -- one being inverted -- for the (X)? It is quite clear that Roman written numerals are to Arabic numerals what hieroglyphs are to writing and what Mataco numeral expression is to the spoken tongue.

It is precisely from nature that man must first have derived the first instruments for expressing his needs and for the development of his ideas.

Chapter XI

Pronouns and Pronominal Particles (1)

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1. Interpolated chapter.

a. Personal Pronouns

The most commonly used personal pronouns are the following:

	Singular	Plural
1.	I - no-j-lam	1. We - no-j-lam-il; no-j-lam-ass (dual?)
2.	Thou - ám, hám	2. You (familiar form) am-il and am-ass (dual?)
3.	This one - tój	3. Those ones toj-ess.

I also have come upon inat, inená and innamáss as plural first person pronouns.

b. Pronominal Particles

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These particles are prefexed to nouns and verbs in every case where the state or action refers to persons; which is why they are so frequently encountered, to the extent that in a dialogue there is hardly a word to which they are not affixed. This phenomenon, added to the elision to which their vowels fall heir when brought into contact with the vowels of the words which they precede, often produces the illusion that they are part of the root of those words.

These particles are as follows in singular and plural, for nouns and verbs:

1st My (singular object), My (plural object), Our (singular object) Our (plural object), I and Us: no, nu, ni, na.

2nd Thy (singular object), Thy (plural object), Your (familiar plural form with singular object), Your (familiar plural form with plural object), Thou and You (objective) -- a, ha.

3rd Of his, of theirs, that one, those ones -- lo, lu, le.

In addition to these particles of relation they customarily use others which are also prefixed to a given word root and which give the absolute or general meaning to the expression. The particles are more frequently t and l, and often la. For example: "flame of fire" is itoj-cúáca; "flame" (in general) is la-cúáca; "hut door" is huet-pè, while "door" (in general) is la-pé or hla-pé.

c. Demonstrative Pronouns

Singular	Plural
This one -- Toj	These ones -- Toj ess
and Toj-tzi,	and Toj-ess-tzi,
Toj-chi	Toj-ess-chi
and Toj-qui.	and Toj-ess-qui
That one yonder -- Toj-licné	These ones yonder -- Toj-ess-licné
That one -- Toj-láni and	Those ones -- To.-ess
Toj-léc-ti	

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In combination, toj or toj-ess precede and tzí, etc., licné, lani etc., follow the word or phrase.

d. Interrogative Pronouns

Who? -- adhéj or âdej.
What? -- atde or hat dezu. [260]

e. Reflexive Pronouns

J-lam -- suffixed -- meaning "same," (the Latin met) is used as personal pronoun and is the root element in the adverbs j-lam-mej, which means "always."

Chapter XII

Regarding Verbs

a. General Observations

The verbs are the really difficult elements in this language to nail down. I confess my ignorance; I cannot even point out an infinitive, an infinitive that is, which I can be absolutely sure is an infinitive. It might be, if I had sufficient time, that I could get to the bottom of the problem but I just do not have enough time to work on it at present. I must add, however, in defense of my good name, that the fault does not lie entirely with my limited intelligence but rather is in greater part due to the many intricacies of this wretched language and to the absolute lack of even the vaguest idea of grammatical forms on the part of my Indian interpreters. When, for example, one asks them how to say "to eat," they are at a loss for an answer, or else give a different answer every time they are confronted with the question. One must ask them how to say "I want to eat," and then "let's eat" and in this way lead them gently to the basic question. And then one comes up against a solid wall,

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for "to eat" together with "to want" is expressed by a special form which includes both ideas. And so it goes.

And then there are the different forms and ways of saying things. For instance, Spanish for yo tengo ("I have") reproduces the French c'et a moi and the Latin id est mihi, and one must run the risk of saying that es ("is") means tengo ("have"). Well, it seems that these Indians have some of these idiomatic expressions too.

And what will the reader think if I say that I have not even been able to discover the plural of verbs? There is a particle en or hen, according to the ending of the word which precedes it, which undoubtedly expresses plurality, but I do not know whether it is a pronominal particle or rather a real verbal inflection. For example: "dance" [singular, imperative--Translator] is catin and "dance" [plural, imperative--Translator] is catinén. So far so good, but let us look further -- "let us dance" is inát-catin, in which the en has become lost and inát meaning "we," has appeared, but in an analogous case this does not happen at all -- for instance: "touch" [singular, imperative--Translator] is hen quié, while "let us touch," is inénhequién, in which there are a number of changes for reason of euphony and pronunciation ease [261] but among which there can easily be distinguished, in the background, the en which had disappeared in "let us dance." This, in itself, would not be a serious problem for it might mean only that there were two plural forms. The real trouble lies in that if we combine the example with subject and object we notice that hen or en agrees with the object and not with the subject, the verb never taking on a passive or neuter quality as happens with certain Latin verbs such as videor, loquor, etc.

For example: "kill [imperative, singular--Translator] the sheep (sing.)" is l-lón tzonatáj; "Peter has killed the sheep (sing.)" is Peiló ilón tzonataj; "Peter has killed the sheep (plural) is Peiló ilonén tzonatáss. Where now is the rule which required the particle en in "dance" (imperative, plural), "let us dance," etc.? This type of confusion crops up dozens of times.

Another confusing example: iloje means to cure; iil means "the sick (one)" but in order to render "the Indians are curing the sick" into the Mataco language one must say uicquiei ilojeje tojiilnen. Where does the "rule of incorporation" begin and where does it end in this sentence?

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So all I can say with any certainty is that en and hen are more often than not found in conjunction with plurality. I say more often than not because it is not always so. For example: "The whites have killed a sheep" is Tsiguuéle tzonataj. Apparently this plural construction with en is not used with the verb except when the object of the action of that verb is plural, or when the plural subject of the verb is one which receives the verb's action, as for instance in "to dance." This seems to indicate that in the syntax of these verbs there is a great difference when compared to ours. There is possibly a similarity in some chases to English verbal usage -- i.e., "I am told," "We are told" etc., in place of "They have told me," "They have told us," which is analogous, after all to the Latin neuter in videor, etc.

b. Regarding Tenses

To judge from the welter of verb forms which I have before me I think I can give assurance that this language has many conjugations. On this score it would be similar to Guaraní, which also has many, and would be very different from the Araucano language, which has only one, and also from the Quichua which likewise, or so it seems to me, has only one -- though an extremely complicated one in compound tenses.

From all the foregoing the reader will gather that I cannot possibly present one or more types of verb conjugations because I have not been able to describe them. Despite this, however, I am in a position to give some forms for a few of the tenses.

One of the more exact of these is the future, which is expressed by means of the present plus a final syllable la. For example: "he returns" is tapil, while "he will return" is tapil-la. This is what might be called the absolute future, for there is another future which I shall call the dubitative and which is formed with the addition of pbiye, which means "may be," this being added at the end. The lá future form is also used to [262] connote duty or obligation to do something, which is also true of our language.

Another form is the past, which consists of adding é to the present form preceded by a repetition of the last letter of the present tense form -- for it is one of this language's idiosyncracies to repeat certain letters, as is done in Italian and so many others, with the

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exception of Spanish. Example: "he arrives" is yom, while "he has arrived" is yommé.

The remote past or preterite, however, is formed by placing the adverb of time náji or náje next to the present, the n being replaced by another letter, usually l, if it falls pleasantly on the ear. For example: "he kills" is ilóm, while "he killed" (preterite) is ilonnaje. Sometimes aje alone is added, as for instance: "he eats"--théuccue, "he ate" -- théu quáje.

Another way of forming the immediate past (which almost corresponds to the imperfect) is by adding nenna, which they use either whole or else reduced to one or other of its two syllables according to the speakers personal whim.

These two words náje and nénna are the same ones which are used in the word "yesterday" -- icuala-náje and "today" -- icuala-nenná; (see how logical these savages are), and, as is the case with the future lá, are set off from the verbal element proper in order to allow for the addition of some infix or other, which may even be a whole phrase.

c. Regarding Personal Flections

It would seem, to judge from the above examples, as if the language of these Indians were totally lacking in verbal endings which had anything to do with persons, although they are -- to a certain extent -- related to number by means of the suffix en. However, be it because of a merely casual pronunciation difference, be it intentional and related to the person of the verb, the fact is that I find the e changed to i in the first person of the past tense in the following examples: "I arrived" -- yammi; "I returned" -- tapini; "I ate" (remote past or preterite) -- tdeucquáji. But it happens anyway, that these changes in verbs to agree with the person concerned are not needed for each has a pronominal prefix attached to it, to wit: nu, a, lo, inat, which correspond to "I," "thou," "he," "we," etc., which undergo certain variations such as: no and ni, lu and li, inné, and I don't remember which others.

However, in negative usage, which is formed with the suffix tde, meaning "no," the word seems to take on a sort of flectional form, but this is to be attributed solely to the desire for euphony. For example: "I see" -- nu huenn; "I do not see" -- nu-huenni-tdé, instead of nuhenntdé; "short" is isset or nisset while "not short" is

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nu yissti tdé, rather than nuissetde; "is he dead?" is yáj iil?, and "he is not dead" is yini tde, instead of yill tdé.

I do not go into further details because I would continually find it necessary to become embroiled in forms about which very little is known as to their differentiations -- and these variations become all the more numerous as the [263] relations which are treated become more complex. Let us take a single example, and that from among the more elementary ones. "Did the Chief (mine) return?" is Yaj tapil-le nucaunía?; "He did not return" -- Tapini-tdé. In this very simple example, why do we have in one instance le, and in the other ni? The interrogative is concerned only with the first part, that is, with yaj. In my opinion it is quite clear that these changes are the result of an aural whim, and I believe that I can almost say that tapil-le is a substitution caused by the nu which follows tapilné, which is in turn a syncopation of tapil-nenná; and so also with tapi ni. Now ab uno disce omnes.

d. Regarding Reflexive Verbs

They seem to form some reflexive verbs by juxtaposing j-lam to the active form. For example: "Pedro killed himself" is Peiló tilonne j-lam. This j-lam translates the Latin met and our own "--self." So the personal pronoun nojlam could be "ego met," that is, "I myself," which would cause it to harmonize more closely with the other pronominal elements. I must make clear here that my references, both here and elsewhere, to Latin are not efforts to establish any sort of analogy whatsoever -- I only do so in an effort to make my report more clear.

e. Regarding Verbs in General

It is worthwhile noting how certain verbs whose meaning has become modified keep to their original root. For example: "to walk" is opil, "to return" is tapil; "to come" is nom, "to arrive" is yom; "to die" is iil, "to kill" is ilón; "to shout, call out, say" is ohn, to speak hon and hon-quié (that is "to speak with") corresponds to our "to converse," which is one more proof, in my opinion,

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of the Indians' quick wit and logical inclination. These expressions could give us the key to the modifying value of certain particles, from which much would be gained regarding the philosophy of language (as in hon-quié) and comparative philology, as in ta-pil, in which t represents repetition of an action -- as retracing one's steps does indeed imply -- and which is found with this meaning in the Araucano language, and, for that matter in ours also as for instance agitar [meaning "to shake" or "agitate"--Translator] from agere, and the Italian seguitare ["To follow"--Translator] which is seguir in Spanish; and there are dozens of other examples.

However, it is by means of postpositions that the vast majority of verbs are formed. We have already given the examples tol-l-ca, "to come from"; tol-l-pe, "to fall from," tol-l-equíote "to fall into," all of which are derived from tol-l, a word of movement. And I am positive that, according to this rule, if I were to say toll-quie (quie is the same as cum -- "with," as in "company") in place of "to accompany" or "to go with," these Indians would understand me. Further examples? "Peter is dying of hunger" is Peilo il-lej nainló (ej means "with" in an instrumental sense). And in order to [264] convince the reader that ej in this case is not a preposition of nainló, "hunger," let us see the following example: "The Indians are dying of hunger" is Uicquii yil ej-i-én nainló, that is yille-ej-én, in which ej precedes en, a suffix of the plural verb which is, naturally, attached and suffixed to the latter and not prefixed to the noun. It is therefore not a "preposition" as we shall call it when we study this part of speech.

This type of preposition usage, together with the other changes and variations of which we have so often complained, is not the least of the causes which make for confusion and difficulty in the study of verbs. And in actual fact, what activities can escape the possibility of being expressed by a verb which covers the basic idea and a postpositional particle which assigns a relation to it? Very few indeed. And very few also are the words which do not have one or other of these disguised insertions which crop up now here, now there, now somewhere else and in a different guise, according to the aural requirements of the moment, and which flabbergast the hearer and surprise and confuse him with their inexplicable changes and variations.

One of the verbal forms for expressing actions which include the idea of possession is that of placing ya next to the word which

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expresses the thing possessed. For example: "woman" is chiecua, "to have a woman (or wife)" is chiecuaya; "fear" is huái', "to be afraid (to have a fear)" is huáya. Another way of indicating possession is as follows: "son" is loss, while "to have sons" is lo lessen; "daughter" is either lo-se or le-ctza, and "to have daughters" is lolesses; "brother" is quiilaj, and "to have brothers" is quiilaliss.

The verb "to be" is not expressed. For example: "I am ugly" is nu-tzi-tdé, which literally means "I goodlooking not."

d. Examples of Verbal Flections

I shall put an end to this very boring matter of the verbs (it has been so for me, I must confess, although I hope it has not for the reader!) by attempting to put together and set down one of the verb conjugations for the indicative mood. I do not guarantee the details -- you already know why -- but I believe that in general it may be accepted as summing up what I know on the subject.

VERB: Ilon -- "to kill."

INDICATIVE MOOD

	Present Tense	Remote Past (Preterite)
Singular:	1. I kill -- nu-ilón	1. I killed -- nu-ilon-náje
	2. Thou killest -- há-ilon	2. Thou killedest -- ha-ilon-náje.
	3. He kills -- l-ilón	3. He killed -- l-ilon-náje or t-ilon-náje

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Plural:		
1.	We kill - inat-ilón-én	1. We killed -- inat-ilonnajién
2.	You kill -- há-ilon-en	2. You killed -- ha-ilonnajién
3.	They kill -- tojéss-ilon-én	3. They killed -- tojéss-ilonnajién.

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IMPERFECT TENSE

Singular: 1. I was killing -- nu-ilonnénna
2. Thou wert killing -- ha-ilonnénna
3. He was killing -- l-ilonnénna

Plural: 1. We were killing -- inat-ilonnénnahén
2. You were killing -- ha-ilonnénnahén
3. They were killing -- tojéss-ilonnénnahén.

PAST PERFECT

Singular: 1. I have killed -- nu-ilonné
2. Thou hast killed -- ha-ilonné
3. He has killed -- le-ilonné
Plural: 1. We have killed -- inat-ilonnehén
2. You have killed -- ha-ilonnehén
3. They have killed -- tojéss-ilonnehén

FUTURE

Singular: 1. I shall kill -- nu-ilón-lá
2. Thou wilt kill -- ha-ilón-lá
3. He will kill -- l-ilón-lá
Plural: 1. We shall kill -- inát-ilon-lá-hen
2. You will kill -- ha-ilon-lá-hen
3. They will kill -- tojéss-ilon-lá-hen.

IMPERATIVE

kill - l-lon.

Let it be understood that the preterite form with náje is used only very rarely, and even less so is the nenná form used.

Do these people have a passive form to their verbs? I don't know. Yet I have noticed that many of the constructions using the passive in the Romance languages are changed about by them

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and rendered into an active form, or at least an intransitive one.

For example: instead of saying "Paul was killed by Pliny," they say "Pliny died because of Paul [sic]" or else "Pliny killed Paul."

I don't think, really, that this necessarily points up an inferiority in their language.

By no means let it be thought that the verbs in this language are easy and simple by virtue of the above conjugation table. It is, in fact, just because they are so jumbled and involved that I am not able to give further moods or tenses, which are so terribly complicated that even now I do not have a firm grasp of their governing rules.

Chapter XIII

Regarding Adverbs

There are a great many adverbs, but those involving time stand out because of the logical manner of their formation which parallels the way in which we form them in our own language. For example: "day" is icuála, which actually means "sun" or "one sun," just as "month" is igüeláj, which literally means "moon"; "beside" [266] is tem-ló; náje, náji or naj mean "past," and also "afterward," in the sense of past time; nenna and na mean "present, now" -- so (quite logically) "today" is icuálanná, that is "present sun"; Spanish mañana is icuála and also quiicuála, in the same way that in Spanish mañana means both "morning" and "tomorrow"; "yesterday" is icuálannáje, that is "the past sun"; "the day before yesterday is icuála el-láje, which means -- since el means "other" and láje is the same as náje -- "the other past sun." Because of some change or harmonious feeling or custom in the language, "the day after tomorrow" is tem-lo icuála, which signifies "beside tomorrow." It is curious that tem-ló is prefixed to icuála to express the idea of a day later and yet náje is suffixed when expressing the idea of a day earlier. Quirks of the language apparently, and yet they must answer to some etymological, not to say philosophical, reason, which resides in their changed position.

Then we must remain in it. But then, my dear reader, if there is still one whom I can call thus, be benevolent to me and my unfortunate work. I beg you for the sake of the love I have for you and of the love I hope you have for me... because of those hours I have stolen from Morpheus while thinking of you and trying to untangle the most intricately intertwined Mataco mesh which has been until now virgin; and I beg you -- even by the mockery which I myself feel falls upon me as I appear to neglect the exact roots of mathematics for the last analysis, believe me, some good may [268] come from all this at a time when you may wish to study a little of the prehistoric history of this people to be found here in South America -- for with the tiny light afforded by philology we may well attempt to discover whether these Redskins were at least as closely related to each other as we are to the Croats. And if this is not reason enough for you..... miserere mei.

Chapter XIV

Regarding Prepositions

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Prepositions in this language as in so many others make up, to a great extent, the base and, so to speak, the philosophy of the language. Placed next to a verb they lend a relational meaning. And yet they are themselves so lacking in clarity and fixity that not long before writing these lines I had marvelled at the apparent paucity of prepositions in this tongue. In this language the very opposite is true of what occurs in the Quichua tongue in which prepositions are truly beautiful, set off from other words, clear, always in the same position -- that is, placed after their object, for which reason they should be called postpositions and not prepositions.

In Mataco the prepositions are also postpositions, but sometimes they are not placed immediately after the noun but after the verb, and are then often mistakenly supposed to be a form of the conjugation, which error I also fell into. Sometimes also they are placed between the verb root (if we may be allowed to use such a term here) and the flectional tense ending, or between a noun root and the ending which is indicative of plurality or case. One

can easily imagine then the horrible confusion confronting the neophyte who is faced with a pile of expressions belonging to a completely new and strange language in which a given word seems to change and be different every time it is used, and for no apparent reason. I for my part confess that for a long time I was unable to understand it and even now I own that I have been able to track down only very few of the rules which govern these changes and which lie hidden among the hundreds of sentences which I have written down.

For example: cue is equivalent to "with"; "we" is, in its abbreviated form nu hén; "with us" is nu cue hén.

Of course, the problem would not be difficult if one could ask an Indian a question regarding an isolated word and he were able to answer in an absolute way. But the Indian, more times than not, has need always to refer the word to some thing. Thus, when one asks him how one says "foot" in his language he will answer ñuccolo if he touches his own foot; accolo if he touches the questioner's foot; toccolo if he touches the foot of some third person. Then there is the confusing problem of [269] different construction. For example: in the above mentioned case of nuccuenen, if one asks the interpreter which is the part which means "with" and which the part corresponding to "us" he will answer (if he is intelligent and knows the language) quite naively: nuc means "with," and cuehen is "us" -- precisely the opposite to what is actually the case.

So it is that there is nothing for it but to go forward slowly and step by step, from the known to the unknown, inquiring first after single words, then after simple, clear sentences, then after less simple but still clear ones, and finally, by dint of repeating the same sentence with slight changes of one word or some one of its parts we shall in all probability, manage, by a simple process of elimination, to arrive at the meaning of each word. And yet even this is not enough for, owing to the properties inherent in this language which I have pointed out elsewhere, owing to the great intellectual distance between the interlocutors, and to the different points of view to which they hold because of mutual ignorance, the wretched student suddenly finds himself face to face with an old word in a new disguise, not knowing why or how or when the change came about and wondering which of the two forms is the

correct or original or basic one. His first reaction is to redouble his efforts and multiply his questions, and thus very often he only redoubles his confusion until he finally ends up by producing a veritable Babel....

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And since we have mentioned Babel, I must remark that the Vielas [sic] Indians translate the word "speak" by the term mbabelon.

But now let us return to our prepositions. It is often said that these prepositions modify the meaning of verbs, but it would be closer to the truth to say that they merely complement them. For example: Tol-l carries with it the idea of movement. When used alone it may mean "to sprout": thus "the grass sprouts" is expressed thus: "grass, tol-l. With the addition of ca at the end it means "to come from," and if ppé is added it means "to fall." Other words are not lacking which express the same thing, however if we want to use tol-l then these particles, which are used as postpositions, must be placed next to the nouns.

It might be supposed, when these prepositions are suffixed to verbs, that they are really prefixes of the objective case; but in spite of the fact that there are some prepositions which are prepositions in every sense of the word, nevertheless, in the above cases they act postpositionally even with verbs, because they modify the latters' endings in accord with their sound, because the verbs thus modified can be used alone -- for other words can be inserted between it (together with its postposition) and the objective case -- which demonstrates that the postposition is attached to the verb.

The main particles, or at least the one which I judge to be so, and which act as do our prepositions are: eckiá -- "until"; tamennej -- "because of"; appé, pé or ppé -- "on top of"; (h)icquió -- "below"; cue, quié, ycque, ecque, ej -- "with" (these are probably one and the same, but modified for reasons of euphony); uuith, uuitd and c-loya, which also [270] mean "with" and are prefixed and are rather to be considered copulative conjunctions; op, ob, "hot," hlot -- "for," and which I have only come across with the meaning of "because," for example: op-toj -- "because" ("for this"); op-qui-lá -- "what for?", while in order to say "why?" they use atddeyéque? which is made up of atde meaning "what" or "how" and yécque -- "with." There is also the postposition ei which is

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like the Italian da and the French chez, and is used for movement to or from a place (the latter often being omitted) and is placed in diverse positions. This ei or iei is part of a most elegant verbal expression: miei, meaning "fetch," composed of móh or mmóh which means "go" and ei (the whole having undergone one of the numerous shifts which are so common to this language and used to drive me to desperation). For example: Instead of saying "go and bring me fire" (itoj) they say miéi-itoj, which is "fetch me fire." At first, and even after I had been working on the language for some time, I thought it was a flection.

Another important postposition is ca which means "of" (genitive and ablative) and is suffixed to both verbs and nouns. With these latter it forms a sort of genitive which I find is used somewhat rarely and then only with proper nouns. With personal pronouns it forms the possessives "my," "thy," "his," which in this tongue are genitive -- if they can be called such -- and follow the same rule as genitives do in Italian in which one may just as readily say "mine" as "of me." So from nu (which is a syncopated form of nojlam -- "I") they derive nujcá -- "my"; ah-ca -- "your," luh-cá -- "his," "of him."

There are other postpositions also: cquí, "within"; lája, which means "without" and is a prefix, and which is a word of negation, for I do not find it prefixed to any words other than those ending in a way which indicates denied possession. For instance, "wifeless" is lája chequó yá, that is "not married."

There are so many others that I cannot possibly recall them all.

The words that express our "with" (ecq, yc-que) lead me to believe that some postpositions govern certain cases and that the varied endings of the latter cause the apparent change in the prefix. For example, "me" is nuya; "with me" is nuyécque -- from which one can easily conclude that a shift has taken place from nuya yécque. And does not the same thing happen in Italian when instead of saying con lo, con la, con li, we say col-lo, col-la, col-li, and in place of di-lo, di-la we say del-lo, del-la?

While on this subject of postpositions, let the reader not marvel on seeing that in Mataco the order is completely different from our own. On the contrary, the shoe is on the other foot for it would be more to the point if he marvelled at our usage, for this business of suffixing the particles which we prefix must be considered as having been the universal norm at one time.

So it is that in German and in English, but especially in the former [271] the transposition of prepositions is quite frequent and is one of the elements which most contribute to language elegance -- not to speak of difficulty for those who wish to learn it starting from one of the so-called Latin group. At least the main difficulty lies there in my opinion, without mentioning the dissimilarity of the words themselves.

In Latin we have examples of prepositional transposition in the following: nobiscum, vobiscum, tecum, mecum and in the interchangeable position of such words as "versus, it being possible to say "I am going 'Romam versus' and 'versus Romam'." And this sort of usage carries over even to conjunctions so that one may say Senatus atque Populus Romanus or Senatus Populusque Romanus which has remained as Rome's famous motto. In Italian we have meco and feco to which the Spanish pleonasm con-migo and con-tigo correspond.

The examples which I have just cited can, in my opinion, be considered as vestiges of preexistant forms.

In South America's Indian languages, postpositions rather than prepositions are the order of the day, and the contrary is only an exception, at least in Quichua and Guarani, which have only postpositions, and in Araucano which makes use of both forms. The above mentioned Indians, together with the Matacos and savage Chaco and Central tribes, occupy all of South America.

May it not be that this form is more useful than ours in contributing to a quick perception of ideas, the main term being expressed first while the changeable particle is attached later? Of course, one of these small particles does not retard appreciation of the relation between the two terms very much, but nevertheless, if we go back and look at the period in which languages had their birth, does it not seem more natural to give first place to the concrete objects and only then express the relationship between them?

suffixing of artificial particles in the interrogative: chu at the end of verbs, and taj at the end of nouns.

For example: "Do you want?" is munanqui? and "water" (accusative) is yacuta. If one were to ask: "Do you want water?", this would be munanquichu yacuta?; "you are called" is sutiqui, and "how" is ima. In order to ask "How (what) are you called?" one must say imataj sutiiqui, one sound -- if spoken -- or calligraphic symbol -- if written -- being economized.

Let it be noted that in Quichua all particles are suffixed, be they conjunctions, prepositions, interrogatives, declensions. This makes of it an exceptionally [sic] typical language.

Chapter XV

Regarding Conjunctions

I have not found a single disjunctive conjunction such as "or," "neither," etc. Instead of "or" they appear to use "if not," and in place of "neither" they seem to repeat the verb. For example, they say "Give me water if there is no wine" instead of "give me [273] water or wine." And also: "I have no water, I have no wine" instead of "I have neither water nor wine."

Conversely, they have many words to express copulative conjunctions such as "and," "also," etc., all of which they prefix, as we do. The more important of this type of conjunction are, it seems to me: uuith or uuitd and c-loya which they use for our "with," as has already been seen, and utcuei, isiqiei, tdéui, which correspond to our [blank left here, but probably "and" was intended--Translator].

I notice that tdéui is used especially in interrogative phrases such as: "I am leaving, and you?" -- Nu-ycque, tdeui am? They have the conditional conjunction "if," which is quiá or cquiá. When a conditional proposition is placed before the main proposition, the latter is joined to uuitd, just as so is used after wenn in German, or cosi in Italian. For example: "If you do not want to, let me know" is cquia ("you do not want to") uuitd ("let me know").

M 175 "Some 60 leagues from the mountains, the marshes of the Pilcomayo River, in the direction of the river Bermejo, are peopled by numerous Tonocotés and Lules who drew away from the territory of Tucumán at the time of the appearance of the first Spanish conquerors." (page 54)

"The nation which lives on the other side of this one (the Teuta) (1)

1. Possibly from "teuj-taj," meaning "big river," the Mataco name for the river Bermejo.--J. Pelleschi.

is the Mataguaye nation, which is the one closest to Jujuy." (page 76)

"Some are called Mataguayes Coronados and others Mataguayes M 191 Churumatas. The Coronados speak Guaraní, although this is not their mother tongue. The Mataguayes Churumatas understand and speak several tongues, such as Quichoa [sic], Guarany [sic] and Ocloya which they pick up from the captives which they hold as prisoners in their territory. They also understand the language of the Tobas. These M 175 Mataguayes were distributed in the following fifty towns: Neantiche, 621 Mocoy, Collemage, Auncapinhe, Hucohas, Hocohá, Oyaha, Natetehá, 103 Chinitiohé, Onin, Anuyguay, Alesnuy, Chayabo, Chioquiose, Hucoha, Chayquehé, Chachinamí, Pelo, Cahotochin, Nacalgoy, Chenesse, Halcacha, Cheneschá, Peque, Nitilinquin, Guays, Guocopa, Hucuchinami, Tiuquiahó, Hocalá, Leguelsehá, Oyaho, Carininquin, Yantis, Luguarache, Neglisehé, Loquelesse, Queyshé, Cotonhá, Tapela, Onoralgualache, Poytin, Hopitata, Hopitahé, Tatotehé, Lechonehá, Lohoteá, Tactoy, Apagatin, Rimpihá." (page 76)

Not one single time do we find the ending "gasta," although ● 194 something similar to "a" and "aho" does appear. A negative proof must not be given undue importance, yet it ought not to be completely ignored [574].

IX

The Description of the Mataguayos
etc. continues

C M 175 "All these nations which we have mentioned with their towns, that is: Taynuyes, Teutas, Mataguayes, Agoyas, Xolotas, Tobas, Mocobies, Yapitalaguas, and also Aguilotes who live among the

III

Phonology

a. Confusion between K. I. Ch, etc.

Among the Matacos sound shifts such as the following are very frequent: quia, quie, quii, quio, quiu to tzá, tzé, tzí, tzó, tzú and to chiá, chié, chií, [236] chió, chiú, and vice versa. Also quiá, etc. to tiá, tié, etc. So it is that we can use any one of the following words for "sheep": tzonataj, quionataj, chionataj, and either huenquié or huentié for "little bird." However, the general use of one of these sounds in preference to another marks off one dialect from another. So it is that the Matacos who live adjacent to the Tobas use tzá, tzé, etc. while those who live near the white settled area use chiá, chié, and so forth.

This linguistic wanderings, may we call them so, are easily understood if one takes great care and if they concern polysyllabic or even bisyllabic words, but when they are found in conjunction with words of only one syllable they are extraordinarily confusing. For example: who could have guessed that tzac-da in one dialect was the same as quiaj or quioj in another?

Withal, it is no less strange and curious than certain phonetic shifts which are instinctive, if we may use this term, with man in general, and which are to be found also amongst us Europeans. For example, in Milan they say chiesa and not quiesa, and the Spaniards say cuchara instead of cuquiara or cuquiaya as in Italian, and so with many other words; squiachare and stiachare (1) to

1. In Italian these words are written schiacciare and stiacciare.

squash. So it is that of the Indians of Quichua leanings, those living in the areas surrounding Santiago often use na while the Collas or inhabitants of Bolivia use ña. Example: na instead of ña, meaning "already," and nojca for ñojca meaning "I." The same thing occurs in Italian, in Portuguese and in Spanish, for

example: nina for niña and farina instead of fariña, and so forth.

And what shall we say of the inversion of letters and syllables? How often does it not happen that on speaking rapidly a word becomes changed because of a change in the order of syllables? Now this is a real instinct which is inherent in language generally, which results in certain sounds in one tongue sounding wrong to a person speaking another sister tongue. Thus the Italian cantilena reappears as cantinela in Spanish, and also guirlanda as guirnalda, and birbone as bribon -- the vir bonus (!) of Latin, and so forth.

And these Matacos also on occasion interchange the order of syllables in their words, for instance: in their way of speaking melon becomes nelom, and so also with other words.

b. Confusion of L and R, etc.

It is to be noted that one of the characteristics of this language is the absolute lack of words having the sound of the Spanish r, which is a letter which they find quite unpronounceable, except with great effort on their part, and even then it is not pronounced correctly.

Their neighbors, however, that is the Tobas, Chulupís, and [237] Chiriguanos, do have an r sound. The Mocovitas serve as a sort of connecting link between the two and pronounce r in the French manner, that is, in their throats something like gr.

It may seem to many that the sound of the French r is more rather than less pronounced than the Spanish r, but I am of a contrary opinion, and base my affirmation on what I have observed among the Matacos, for whom it is easier to say Pegro than Pero, and Peilo than Pegro. Anyway, the fact that r can be pronounced (even though imperfectly) by the Matacos reveals that the lack of the sound r in the language of these Indians is not due to an organic defect in the speech apparatus but rather to convention or to the tongue's tendencies. Their not having practiced this sound for centuries on end combined with the action of physiological heredity may have been the cause of their having partially lost the ability to trill their r's as the Spanish do and, with the passage of time, this may result in their losing the ability to do so completely.

And yet it may just be that the whole difficulty is merely an aural one, the ear being unaccustomed to the new sound and, while striving to reproduce it, falling short of the mark because of the already settled habits of the mouth organs -- anyone of us who has attempted to learn one of the ever so many foreign languages has experienced the same thing.

c. The letter "D" and its variations

Neither can they pronounce the d clearly, although there are words which have sounds that come close to it, but always in the combination td and th and pronounced almost as the English do at the beginning of a word in which there is a pronounced occlusion. Examples: "How?" - tdé hoté; "he eats" - theucque; "marksman" [in Spanish tirador --Translator] - thilalol.

d. B, D, F, G, P, T, joined to the semivowel L.

I have yet to hear, from a Mataco, the pronunciation of b, d, f, g, p, t, jointed to an l or an r. This brings about those great changes in acquired Spanish words which render them almost unintelligible, as for example: ccailá instead of cabra; Pailó instead of Pablo; hlẽno instead of freno; and hueiló instead of pueblo. And here is another peculiarity: a labial which makes up a single syllable with ua, ue, ui, uo, uu, they cannot pronounce, and in its stead they use an aspirated h voiced softly. This defect or degeneration of sounds is also to be met up with often among the country people in this Republic[Argentina--Translator]. So that they sometimes say gueno instead of bueno, and juego instead fuego.

While on this subject of the articulation of these sounds it is remarkable how they agree with the pronunciation of my teacher of the Chinese language, an extremely intelligent cook called Ayaó who can write in his own tongue. The Chinese, apart from lacking the r, as is notorious [238], cannot pronounce those same combinations of letters which the Matacos find impossible to manage, nor can they pronounce the d, among many others. So

it is that it often seems to men when I converse with Ayaó, that I am talking to a Mataco, there being also cetain common physical traits such as skin color, slanted eyes, coarse straight hair, and flattened nose. When he attempts to say adós he says alio; instead of tres he says tles; instead of propio, lopio; instead of señora, señola; instead of teatro, teetelo. It is often almost impossible to guess the Spanish word which he is trying to copy, as, for instance, when he says teetelo for teatro; ollejaio for ovejas; lialio for diario; poole for pobre; huelo-lía for buen día and huela-loche for buena noche.

And, since we are talking about the subject, I must make note of the fact that I have been impressed that these Chinese have a large number of words ending in lo. It is also worth mentioning, or so it seems to me, the manner inwhich the l takes the place of r and also, in a general way, o the other sound combinations which they find difficult to reproduce. Regarding the r among the Chinese, I must confess that I have a word, among the two hundred collected, in which there i an r; it may be, however, that the position occupied by thisletter contributes to facilitating its pronunciation, as happens wth d among the Matacos. The word to which I refer is tai-hi-ró, teato, in which the h is pronounced in such a way that it takes awaymuch of the energy and forcefulness of the r. Can it be foreign? This language sacrifices a great deal to auphony and thereore has, where two vowels meet, more apostrophes than do French or Italian, for instance: nam-nu-am (meaning "not I") slids its syllables to such a degree that only one consonant and one reenforced vowel are left. This gives rise to certain consonant grouping in which each consonant must be pronounced and given its dueweight, as for example in atplei which must be pronounced át-pe-léi, almost átt-(e)-p-(e)-lei, and means "What is your name?" In this phenomenon there is a parallel with the common usage of French slang and with the English auxiliary verbs "do," "will," "shall," and so forth, when used in relaxed conversation. There are also duplicated consonants, even at the end of words, such as in yelatáss, "horses." For this reason one must be cautious and weigh carefully each element contained in a word or a phrase, and not gloss over them carelessly. At the least expected moment we see

it reappear with all its train of syllables. These differences are of special importance in the oratorical art of these Indians. Mention must also be made, however, of the fact that word endings such as j and que are often suppressed and lost, their place being filled by placing an extra stress on the preceding letter. Example: yelatá for yelatáj, meaning "horse"; ndto'c for ndtó-cque, meaning "much." Furthermore, the position of accents varies in accord with the position of the word in a sentence. For example: asado["roast," barbicue--Translator] is pú-cuè, while "put on the roast" is ph'o a-pú-cue. These muted endings mentioned above reveal themselves when followed by another word or when the speaker wishes to pronounce the word carefully. The same thing occurs as happened to the French doncque (dunque) and avecque.

[239] e. Vowels and diphthongs.

In the study of these languages, if we use our five vowels in order to reproduce the Mataco sounds, we will find that we will inevitably have to use diphthongs. By diphthong I mean the union of two or more vowels which are to be pronounced simultaneously and in such a way as to reproduce that complex sound of the diphthong which includes all the component vowel sounds. These would be natural diphthongs which, if one could visualize them fixed in writing, would later give rise, because of the inevitable alternations in pronunciation, to conventional diphthongs such as the French ou, the Latin ae and oe, and the German eu. Therefore, I hold that in a written language all diphthongs are to be considered as symbols of a previous and different phonetic expression.

In studies of this sort it is obvious that the alphabet of any one language is quite insufficient, each language requiring an alphabet of its own -- unless one were willing to adopt a whole string of letters longer than a litany. We must add that our alphabet (the Italian) is really one of the poorer ones, particularly because of the lack of a gutteral sign and a sign signifying aspiration, two sounds which are very common in a large number of the world's languages. And our alphabet would be even poorer were

it not that it has been artificially enriched from outside by the addition of the letter k, which does not belong to us.

f. Sounds foreign to the Spanish phonetic system.

If we are to transcribe the Mataco language using the letters of our alphabet (the Italian), we must modify it in the following way which will, in a general and loose way, serve to transcribe many other languages: Addition of the German ch, (the German j would also be useful but it would be too easily confused with the Italian j which has the sound of i) an aspirated h as in certain French words; a sign to express the prolongation of a vowel sound (not its reduplication) for which the same h might do (as is the custom in German and which, in my opinion, goes hand in hand with the physical fact of the pronunciation of h); an English th, but having a quality somewhere between t and d, thus becoming a sort of consonant diphthong; an ou diphthong, not having the sound of the French u but spoken in such a way as to pronounce both vowels extremely quickly. The diphthongs o͡éú or é͡ú are pronounced as has already been said; an aspirated nasal h, which I indicate with a comma on the upper left side, in order to be able to differentiate it, and a liquid l which is very similar to il. Vice versa, we must abolish certain letters from our alphabet, such as r, d, f, v, and only use b in combination with p, which latter is also to be used only with b and with a special sound the pronunciation of which can be [240] approximated with a final h, thus forming what might be called the diphthong p-h, the p ending with a breathy explosion.

In this way, and without the introduction of strange new characters which are never easily retained in the memory and which one would have had to know beforehand, I have transcribed my Mataco, my Guaraní, my Quichua, my Mocoví, my Chulupí, my Toba and my Chinese, with the Spanish phonetic system in my notes and with the Italian system in my books, to which latter end I substituted ch for j and i for y.

These signs are fairly well known so that we, (that is, the reader and I) who are not experts in the field of linguistics can read the words without any great pronunciation difference, thus

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satisfying the requirements of the inquisitive, if not those of the scientist (1).

> 1. In this translation, as is the case in dictionaries, the Spanish alphabet has been used for the reproduction of Indian words. J.P.

A nasal intonation runs through the whole of this language. There is hardly an occasion when h, j and q at the beginning of a syllable is not pronounced nasally -- the exception being when the final consonants of the preceding syllable is lost. I have come upon this phenomenon in all the South American languages with which I have had anything to do, but in none has it been so marked as among the Matacos. It may be because I know the other languages even less than I do this one. It is to this tendency that I attribute the shift from the Spanish ending ando to the Indian anno -- for example: tomando changes to tomanno -- our European languages have not escaped this change unscathed, witness the two letters m and n of our alphabet, the sonorous en and em of French, and the strangely comic way in which everybody pronounces words of endearment addressed to little children.

Another characteristic of this language is the apparent arbitrariness of its sounds. The reader will readily be able to appreciate this by just leafing through the dictionary: there seems hardly a time when the same word is pronounced in the same way, even when spoken by the same person, and this is even worse when it forms part of a sentence. It is truly enough to drive one to despair (!) and would lead to who knows what comparisons of inferiority but that, fortunately for the Matacos, there is a complete vindication and absolute proof to the contrary in that most glorious, polyphonic, word-rich (and in this sense -- that is of arbitrariness of sounds -- similar) language: English!

Chapter IV

Of words and the manner of their formation

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It is interesting and amusing to see the way in which these people form words to designate an object new to them. Observation is the supreme teacher.

constructions. In what way can it be said that they are behind other languages? 192 196

[244] Thus for Venus they employ the same verbal image as we and the Latins do, that is lucero ["morning star"--Translator] ijuála-hu, "mother of the day"; similarly they call the wrist "mother of the hand," tcué-huo; the abispa tic-lan [Enigmatic. The closest I can get to any logical meaning is "the tic-lan wasp," which is not helpful at all--Translator] they call "mother of the tic-lan, tic-lán-huu; and the beating of the pulse is "little heart," tdul-lecuáj.

The Mataco language may be lacking in certain particular sounds (articulations) but, on the other hand, it has a superfluity of other particular sounds (articulations). Among these latter the following stand out: quiá, quié, quií, quío, quíu, and cquiá, and so forth, which together with others of similar sound are so frequent as to leave one in some doubt as to whether the language is not made up of the same syllable repeated a thousand times over in the same sense. We know already that quiá, quié etc. can change places with tzá, tzé and so forth, or with chiá, chié, etc., or with tchiá, tchié, etc. Furthermore the inversion of the constituent elements of a word is frequent, for example: "wide" is quü-tzaj-hu and also i-tzaj-quié -- it can therefore be readily understood to what extent Indian oratory can spread itself out and expand, as far as form goes, without really saying anything different. This sort of thing must be very generalized. General Mansilla in his outstanding book Una expedición a los Indios Ranqueles ["An expedition to the Ranquel Indians"--Translator] tells of having experienced this Indian fondness for repetitiveness, and I did also among the Tobas when we were harangued for half an hour and were really only told the same thing in several different ways according to Faustino the interpreter. 195

In their formation of compound words they follow the English and German usage; for example: "gloves," which are handschuhe in German, that is "hand shoes," are cqüéí-pbut among the Indians, that is "hand coverers." The same thing happens in negative sentences; example: "I do not see," is Ich sehe nicht in German and nu-ihenni-tde in Mataco, that is, "I see not," which is also precisely the manner of expression of the inhabitants of the areas surrounding Milan. 192 193

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

765 551 Chaco tribes. These savages as a rule are very reluctant to mention their true Indian names. Thus, as I have mentioned before, when the Chaco Indians visit the whites they nearly always assume names for use instead of their real names. If the Indians are thus careful with the names of the living, those of the dead are particularly regarded as taboo and must never be mentioned, especially by the nearest relatives. When I asked one of my Indian friends about the name of a man who had just died, he hesitated for a moment, looked round, and when he saw that no one of the relatives was near, he *whispered* the name in my ear. This superstition, [774] I believe, is ultimately based on the idea, held by all Indians, that *the soul of a person is inherent in his name*. To know a person's name is therefore the same as to have his soul in one's power, and supernatural influences can be exerted upon him through this invisible part of his personality, just as they can be exerted through a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail. If the soul is believed to be in the name, we can easily understand why the names of the dead are especially taboo. To mention it is the same as to enter into close contact with the departed soul itself, to which the infection of death is attached, and this is supposed to entail unfortunate consequences, at least for the nearest relatives. For an outsider there is evidently not the same personal danger. But since a person may be controlled and conjured through his name, it is further believed that the rest of the dead in the grave may be disturbed by mentioning his name. It is therefore considered a dreadful indiscretion against the relatives to speak of the deceased by name. This is the idea prevailing both among the Tobas and among other Chaco tribes. Generally [795] the Indians do not like to speak about the dead at all, and if they do, their tacit maxim is: *de mortuis nil nisi bene*. The relatives would never admit that they fear a dead parent and regard him as malicious. They always pronounce him to be »good», as if believing that by such a euphemism they may change his character or paralyse the harmful effects arising from him.

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head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

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In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and "hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

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The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

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It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

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When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usually at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the

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satisfying the requirements of the inquisitive, if not those of the scientist (1).

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A nasal intonation runs through the whole of this language. There is hardly an occasion when h, j and q at the beginning of a syllable is not pronounced nasally -- the exception being when the final consonants of the preceding syllable is lost. I have come upon this phenomenon in all the South American languages with which I have had anything to do, but in none has it been so marked as among the Matacos. It may be because I know the other languages even less than I do this one. It is to this tendency that I attribute the shift from the Spanish ending ando to the Indian anno -- for example: tomando changes to tomanno -- our European languages have not escaped this change unscathed, witness the two letters m and n of our alphabet, the sonorous en and em of French, and the strangely comic way in which everybody pronounces words of endearment addressed to little children.

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Chapter IV

Of words and the manner of their formation

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It is interesting and amusing to see the way in which these people form words to designate an object new to them. Observation is the supreme teacher.

[241] For example, their name for "small bell" is quíu-hút-tzét, meaning "spider belly" [no pun or connection in Spanish--Translator]; a rifle they call as our forefathers did, that is, arquebuse, that is, "fire bow" - itoj-letzej derived from itoj, "fire" and letzej, "bow"; they call "shot" "little bullets," as do the Italians, that is: c-lóquass, from c-lo meaning bullet and quass' which is a plural dimunutive ending. A piece of steel for striking fire with a flint, which they had never seen before (as was true also for all the things mentioned above) they call itoj-cquia, that is, "remedy or instrument of fire," while the flint itself they called ten-thé or stone; the wick they call itoj-léss from less meaning "sheaf," "bundle," "group," "family"; the cartridge shell they call c-lo-'hi from c-lo meaning bullet and 'hi, a particle which signifies "container" or "possession"; a mirror is tope-yaj-hi, tope-yaj meaning "image," "shadow"; a sock is ecolo-búth, which is derived from ecoló, "foot" and bhút, "covering." On the other hand shoe is to them nissót or sót, which proves that they already had knowledge of it, for they may on occasion use a kind of sandal such as that worn by the country people and called usutas. They make them from a piece of hide which serves as sole and two thongs which go between the large and second toe and are tied above the ankle. Matches [fósforos in Spanish--Translator] they call as we do ítossass, a contraction of itoj-quuass, which means "little fires"; and a match box is itoj-hi-huass, that is, "keeper of little fires."

A word which has always intrigued me and whetted my curiosity regarding its etymology is yúccúas which means tobacco, a product which was not known before in the Chaco. I think that I am not mistaken when I derive it from yu or iú, meaning "burned" and cúas, which means "to chew," "break up," "grind." As coincidence will have it, in these two activities both the use and the end result of the use of tobacco are involved. Furthermore, when an Indian says "give me some burned to chew" is he not saying pretty much what we do when we ask "give me something to smoke" [dame con que fumar in Spanish means literally "give me that with which to smoke"--Translator], that is, something to make smoke with?

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Another analogy in expression of thought -- in addition to those resulting from words in detail and from many other elements -- is to be found in the use of téi to designate eyes and face, similar to the poetic use amongst us present-day Italians of viso for face, from the Latin visus, which means "sight."

A door they call hlappé bhut or "door-opening coverer"; and in this I believe that they are more exact than we who lack a term as clear and precise as is this.

They use the same word huolêi for wool, hair [cabello in Spanish is limited to "hair on the scalp"--Translator] and "hair" [pelo, that is, hair on any part of face or body other than scalp--Translator], but precede it with a name qualifying the respective object. We do the same thing but it passes unperceived when we say cabello to signify the hair of the scalp via a syncopation which puts its etymology on the wrong track. We have a great many such misleading word shifts in our language, and the Matacos have even more [242] which makes it even more difficult to keep tabs on them.

They use the same word huolêi for the leaves of trees, thus giving one to understand that for them leaves are the hair of trees. And really they come close in this to the actual physical facts for the trees which predominate in the Chaco are of the minosa family and have leaves which are complexly and minutely subdivided, thus giving rise to the botanical term "pinnate" and "bipinnate" which are terms that justify the Mataco name which is in such close agreement with the meaning of the scientific term pinnate [from the Latin pinna meaning feather--Translator].

It is worthwhile mentioning the way in which they distinguish between the tree and its fruit -- this is done by means of an inflection; for example: the mistol tree is o'hó-yucqué, its fruit is o'hóyaque; the vinal tree is attécque, its fruit attáje; the black algarrobo tree is uossot-etzúje, its fruit uossot-etzáje, and so forth.

One notices here the constant change of u to a. We do nothing different when we call the pear tree pero and its fruit pera, the apple tree manzano and its fruit manzana, and so forth. This does not mean that there are not other ways of naming these things.

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The names used for human family relationships change with the sex of the person involved. Need this startle us who have "mother" and "father," yerno [son-in-law--Translator] and nuera [daughter-in-law--Translator] which might more practically have been yerno, yema. It is strange that all languages seem to run along the same lines, the American ones being no exception. What is more, these latter not only make a distinction between the sex of the relative who is referred to but also between that of the person speaking. For example: in Araucano the father refers to his son as fotún and to his daughter as ñahue, while the mother calls her son coñi huenthú, coñi being the general term for "child" in the mother's terminology. In Quichua the father calls his son churi and his daughter ususí, while the mother uses the term huahua.

In the Chinese language, according to my interpreter Ayao, whom I hired not long ago for two francs an hour, son is Tsaé, and daughter, Pnoé; father is Lu-tao; mother Loúmuú; brother, Ghoó-séí-lóu; and sister, Ttaí-tzt-é.

In Mataco we have the following names: father, quía; mother, ccó; son, locsé or lotsé; daughter, lectzá; brother-in-law, quayenécque; sister-in-law, ticquié; brother, lecquiilá or cjculá; sister, cjinno; uncle, uitoc; aunt, uidóje; nephew, lec-jié-los (probably a combination of son and brother); niece, cjíaió; father-in-law, quióti; mother-in-law catelá; cousin, huac-lá. I find that the terms for son-in-law and daughter-in-law are the same as those used for brother-in-law and sister-in-law, and the term for brother-in-law is also used for son-in-law, which leads me to believe that I made a mistake in my notes.

The various words used to designate the same degree of [243] relationship, according to whether it be male or female must be attributed, in my opinion, to the agglutinative system adopted in the beginning in order to determine it, but whose etymological genesis subsequent alterations have caused to become lost. The fact is clear that for a married couple a nephew, for example, must be, for one of them, the son of a sister or brother, and for the other of a brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

If we draw together into a lump the words which express these diverse relationships, we shall find that the same degree of

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family relationship, let us say, for example, a nephew, has four different names.

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An equally interesting form is that used for the demonstrative pronouns, which is similar to French usage for it is composed of the pronoun toj meaning "this one" (corresponding to the French ce) and certain particles of location such as licné for "that one over there"; letti or lani for "that one"; and others, among which are tzi for "this one." This tzi is equivalent to chi and to quii and is interesting because we come upon it again in the Araucanian language. These demonstrative pronouns also have an adjectival use, and when so employed, become separated, the toj part being prefixed to the noun and the licné, tzi etc. being suffixed, these latter can then not be declined, but the former (that is, toj) is declined. Now then, does not the same thing happen with French demonstratives? For instance with ceci and cela, which in the plural form are ceux-ci, ceux-la, and become separated when applied to some other term.

And do such similarities in form not reveal a great harmony in human intelligence, the same linguistic recourses being used to express a like order of ideas in spite of the distance which separates the different races?

The following derivation deserves special mention because it is revealing of a whole order of ideas: "No" is ka, "nothing" is kiã, "nobody" is kiái; the three words keep to the same root, and in a way which is clearer and more logical than our corresponding words. Likewise we have tde meaning "no" and that meaning "nothing," these two terms used always at the end of a word or phrase.

Tell me now, what more elegant and more compactly logical does philology have to show than the manner in which the Matacos express possessing, containing, executing, or exercising a skill? The letter h (when it has an apostrophe it is to be pronounced nasally) shows up in many words, not to say all, which express possession or capacity. Now hi and huu express that which contains, he who possesses, and he who does something; huet means "house," "the place in which." For example: "fish" is yácsét, "fish pond" is yácsétte-hi; "shoes" are hissóhéss, "seller of shoes" is nissohésse-hi, "maker of shoes" is nissohésse-huu, and "shoe shop" is nissohésse-huet. And in all analogous cases they use the same

constructions. In what way can it be said that they are behind other languages? 192 196

[244] Thus for Venus they employ the same verbal image as we and the Latins do, that is lucero ["morning star"--Translator] ijuála-hu, "mother of the day"; similarly they call the wrist "mother of the hand," tcué-huo; the abispa tic-lan [Enigmatic. The closest I can get to any logical meaning is "the tic-lan wasp," which is not helpful at all -Translator] they call "mother of the tic-lan, tic-lán-huu; and the beating of the pulse is "little heart," tdul-lecuáj.

The Mataco language may be lacking in certain particular sounds (articulations) but, on the other hand, it has a superfluity of other particular sounds (articulations). Among these latter the following stand out: quía, quié, quií, quío, quíu, and cquiá, and so forth, which together with others of similar sound are so frequent as to leave one in some doubt as to whether the language is not made up of the same syllable repeated a thousand times over in the same sense. We know already that quiá, quié etc. can change places with tzá, tzé and so forth, or with chiá, chíe, etc., or with tchía, tchié, etc. Furthermore the inversion of the constituent elements of a word is frequent, for example: "wide" is quū-tzaj-hu and also i-tzaj-quié -- it can therefore be readily understood to what extent Indian oratory can spread itself out and expand, as far as form goes, without really saying anything different. This sort of thing must be very generalized. General Mansilla in his outstanding book Una expedición a los Indios Ranqueles ["An expedition to the Ranquel Indians"--Translator] tells of having experienced this Indian fondness for repetitiveness, and I did also among the Tobas when we were harangued for half an hour and were really only told the same thing in several different ways according to Faustino the interpreter. 195

In their formation of compound words they follow the English and German usage; for example: "gloves," which are handschuhe in German, that is "hand shoes," are cqūéí-pbut among the Indians, that is "hand coverers." The same thing happens in negative sentences; example: "I do not see," is Ich sehe nicht in German and nu-ihenni-tde in Mataco, that is, "I see not," which is also precisely the manner of expression of the inhabitants of the areas surrounding Milan. 192 193

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They have general terms which represent certain abstractions such as "bird," "fish," "tree," and also particular ones with which they differentiate between particular species. What is more they even have abstract nouns, for in addition to such words as "never," "always," they have others, "fear" for instance, which they call uái, a word which also means "tremor" or "trembling." For earthquake they say hunat uái, which means "earth tremble," just as in Spanish one says "tremor of the earth." Can it be therefore that for the Matacos to fear is to tremble? Is it not in this way, taking the part for the whole, that our own abstract terms came into being in the great majority of cases? Now trembling is one, the commonest, of the many outward manifestations of fear.

I affirm that these Indians are in full possession of the human 151 intellectual faculties and ability to judge rationally, and these developed to such a degree that they can be considered our equals both in their way of reasoning and in their antiquity. The gap which exists between them and us is one which exists only in the actual world of facts and of the ideas which refer to [245] those facts -- a gap which is in no way proportional to that which exists between their intellectual faculties and ours. And this is easily understood. 000

How many years have gone by, how many were and how many are the individuals amongst us who have taken full advantage of the intellectual benefits of science, ethics and higher education generally? Very small in number are they if we take into account the historical antiquity of man and the number of men who have lived. The effects, therefore, of human psysiological traits must have changed the common heritage of humanity in the whole world during the period of its limited civilizations very little, if at all.

The fact of not having reflected on this phenomenon is the cause behind the ignorant persons's astonishment at being confronted with the advanced conditions and relative progress to be found amongst savage peoples.

The short intellectual and moral distance which separates them from us is an eloquent testimony to the hoary antiquity of man, dating back to the separation of man from his pre-human ancestors, which dwarfs into insignificance the few years which separate us from a state of savagery akin to that in which these Indians live.

These suffixes taj and quuaj and quiaj, although they are well defined particles, may nevertheless, and probably ought to, be considered as [247] inflections, for they mean nothing by themselves and furthermore it is they which are declined and not the words to which they are attached (1). And it is worth noting that

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1. I find in my notes that taj is sometimes a shortened form of oitaj, meaning "almost."

in the matter of declension they follow a rule quite contrary to the one used for the suffixes corresponding to demonstrative pronouns; the same phenomenon which is encountered in French and Italian diminutives. Taj and quiaj, of which the plurals are tass and quiáss, divide and separate as do the demonstratives, for example: "box of matches" is itoj-ʾhi-cuass, that is "fire-box-little"; a case of incorporation (2).

2. In Mataco, "matches" is translated as "little fires," itoj-huaj (euphonic h in place of c), thus following our usage even in this detail.

Finally, it seems that they habitually place an i in front of a foreign word. For example the Spanish ñato ["snub nose"--Translator] becomes iñato, in which they coincide with the Mocoví Indians. It may be just a simple euphonic exigency.

Chapter VI

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Some curious cases of onomatopoea and sound similarities.

Only very few words in this Indian language can be considered onomatopoetic, that is, imitative of the sounds they express. Which phenomenon of sound imitation is considered by some to be the origin of human language, developed later by man's intelligence.

To shout or yell is óhn; lightning is jĺepp; dumb or mute is huó-huó; cough is cacojtáss; cricket is li-tzil; parrot is quie-quié

and pelican [sic.], commonly called chajá ["Crested screamer" is W. H. Hudson's name for this large, goose sized bird--Translator] is tzá-coj, both names being derived from the bird's call. Many other words are to be found similar to these. R2 196

Following I shall set down a few Mataco words which are similar in sound to those found in Old World languages. 192

Si["yes"--Translator] in Mataco is hié, in English "yes," in German ya, and in Italian gia. "No" in Mataco is ka, in the Tuscan dialect of Italian cke, and kein ("nobody") in German. "Son" is tzé or ssé in Mataco, tzé in Bohemian, tzae tze in Chinese. Enfermo ["ill"--Translator] is iell or yell in Mataco, "ill" in English. "For" is op in Mataco, ob in Latin--it may be added that p and b are interchangeable in all languages with the greatest of ease. "Countryside" or "field" is ajlú in Mataco, agro in Latin and Italian -- let it be remembered that the Matacos use l in place of r, so that ajlú takes the place of ajrú -- "dog" is sinoj in Mataco, cynos in Greek. The next few words contain similar letters in inverted order such as in the previously mentioned "melon" - nelom: "rooster" is húh or kúh in Mataco, coq in French; "cricket" is li-tzil in Mataco, zillo in Tuscan; casa ["house"--Translator] is hauet in Mataco, haus in German, [248] "house" in English, and huasi in Quichua; con ["with"--Translator] is uuitd in Mataco, "with" in English; "and" is ut-cuei in Mataco, atque in Latin.

Furthermore, and as an additional point of interest, I must say that there is, in Chinese, a superabundance of the syllables tzié, tzié, etc., schié, schié, (sch to be pronounced as is the Catalonian x), tzá, tzé, etc., as also ttai or tai, which mean "big"; and lo, the meaning of which is still unknown to me but which I repeatedly come across at the end of words. This fact, combined with its pronunciation, which is practically identical to Mataco pronunciation, merits serious reflection on the part of the linguist, not because of any real relationship but as a phenomenon of concurrence.

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What further attracts my attention is the following: Instead of our "night" they use a word which means "earth," that is, hunát hunná, just as for "day" they make use of their word for "sun," as if they had intended to oppose one to the other. It may not be too farfetched to see in this a sort of philosophy in which the earth and the sun represent two opposite principles: darkness and light, good and evil. I, however, have not been able to perceive any such philosophy in their ideology, although it is true that something of this sort -- somewhat materialized -- is to be found in their religion, as we have had occasion to see in an earlier section of this treatise.

And is this business of using the sun, or light, to express the idea of time not an intellectual parallel or approach to the Aryan, for from the Sanscrit dyu, that is "light" [Spanish luz--Translator] came the Latin dies, the Spanish día, and the Italian di, all of which mean "day" or "day's effort."

Meanwhile, in order to say "this afternoon" they say hunná and quiá-hunná, and for "last night," hunná-tzi-nná, keeping thus to the same form and sequence followed in the order of words which we saw in "today," "tomorrow," etc.

Furthermore, their expression for "sky" is ppe-lé, which must 192 be translated as "that which is above," from ppé, "above" and lé 821 which is a contraction of lél-lé or c-lel-lé, a patronimic word which is used to express the concept of origin, provenience, father-land, etc.

It is said that savages have no abstract ideas, but I ask, is the 192 idea of "always" or "never" abstract or not? Without waiting for an 196 answer I say that these Indians in question have the word inne-mid which expresses "never," and c-lam-mej for "always," which they derive, respectively, from innem -- "more" (Italian mai, Latin umquam) and the negative d; and from j-lam, meaning "same" plus the postposition ej.

It may be objected these are expressions made up of words which separately mean something more limited, which is valid as far as the objection goes. The French, let it be remembered [267] say toujours, "all the days," with the meaning of "always" and thus express an idea which is indefinite, or rather infinite, by means of a word which of itself has a limited meaning as is the case with "day." The fact of the matter is that a given abstraction is not

limited to the words used to convey it but hinges rather on the intention behind it. If this were not so what could one say in defense of the English word "always"?

While we are on this subject let me mention that the particles naje and nenná -- the latter sometimes missing its first syllable, sometimes its last and shifting from i to e [sic] -- are used to make two verb tenses. The first, that is naje, being employed for the remote past or preterite and the other for the past perfect. For example: "to return" is tapil; "he returned" is tapil láje; "he has returned" is tapil-lé (the second l in both cases is the same as n, as was explained above in the treatment of icuála-el-láje).

In place of "midday" or "noon" they say icuála icni, which, as far as I can make out means "high sun" or "up above sun"; and in order to convey the idea of "midnight" they say hunnat-quiú-nej, which I take to mean "low earth" or "underneath earth." For "it is early" they say inataj, and for "it is late," hunáj.

They have a syllable, tde, or dthé, or ntdé, which is the basic element for a great number of adverbs of place and of time. For example: "why?" is atdyécque; "where?" is tdené; "whence?" is dtel che; "how?" is atde-tzó; "how much?" is tde-hoté; "when?" is tdé-naj-hote. Hoté alone means "as," and naj expresses the further meaning that the question refers to a somewhat remote period in the past. Let it be noted that wherever a precedes it usually refers to "thou," since the question is asked of a second person. This goes to show how important it is to know the circumstances of time (tense) and person to which the questions refer, when writing the answers.

I am afraid that I shall bore the reader with this mass of data on the Mataco language, and yet I do not know, for the life of me how to keep from telling that little which I have been able to learn of it and gather in the limited free time allowed me by my professional work and which usually comes only in the very late hours of the night. If I make digressions to keep the reader from becoming tired I fear that I shall write too lengthily, and if I make no digressions and write a straight report I fear to be too dry and boring. . . . Certainly I know not which way to turn. Who will suggest some bright idea which will afford escape from this slough? No one?

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175 page 164 and following is so to the point that I must needs quote it in its entirety.

"The Mataguayo tongue is spoken by a quite populous nation, the most villainous in the whole Chaco, located between 21° and 24° of latitude and 315° to 317° of longitude, bordering on the territory of the Chiriguanos. The Indians of said nation are known to the Spaniards by the name of Mataguayos, a name taken from the Mataguayo tribe which used to do their agricultural [584] labor for them and also be useful in trading. The other tribes of the Mataguayo nation were known later as time went on under the names of Agoyas, Tentes, Tainoas (or Tainuzes), Palomos, Ajotas, Tañis (it is conjectured that this last tribe belongs to another nation). These names are no longer used, their place having been taken by the following: Matacos, Hueshuos, Pesatupos, Abuchetas, Imacos, etc.

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[197] All the tribes speak the same language with some small differences, as reported by Abbot Joseph Araoz, resident in Faenza, who was a missionary to the Mataguayos and compiled a grammar and a vocabulary of their language some forty years ago. However, by reason of the great length of time elapsed and owing also to his very advanced years, he no longer remembers the language which he has not attempted to keep in mind as it was useless to him under the present circumstances in which blessed Providence has placed us. The aforementioned Mr. Araoz put forth a great deal of effort together with other missionaries
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[197] towards the conversion of the Mataguayos, of which 100 were added to the Chiriguano mission station called Rosario. No small number of Jesuits, both in the past century and in the present one have striven for the conversion of the Mataguayos, but with no other result than that of martyrdom, as is recounted in volumes IX, X and XXIV of Father Charlevoix's Historia del Paraguay [History of Paraguay].

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175 "The Lule tongue, simple in its construction and different from the other American tongues, (of which I have any knowledge or whose grammatical elements I have read) is spoken in two Jesuit mission stations in the Chaco. These places, which are called Miraflores and Valbuena, belong to the diocese of Tucumán and stand on the banks of the Salado River, near the 25th degree of latitude and between 313° and 314° of longitude. Valbuena lies east of Miraflores, about twelve
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175 leagues. Father Machoni, in his Lule grammar printed in 1732 (from
114 which I have extracted the grammatical compendium which I shall publish) gives a brief account of the nations that used to speak the Lule

101 131 speech and customs are somewhat different, but in substance it is the same language, and they understand each other perfectly when each speaks in his own way."

"Across from the Colonia Crevaux, on the left bank towards the north there is another tribe called Chorotis which must originally have been a group captured by the Noctenes for their language is a true Mataco or Noctén dialect and many words are identical with Noctén words."

"It is true that these Chorotis live as unto themselves forming a separate tribe, but they are related to and have continual dealings with the Noctenes. Their pronunciation is, however, much clearer and more intelligible than that of the Noctenes."

"These same Noctenes are related to the Matacos of Oran and the Chaco, in which place the Noctenes are called Matacos, and the Matacos living between the left bank of the Oran River and the reservation in which we had a mission at the beginning of this century, take the name of Vejoses, and have their own local way of speaking the same language as the Noctenes and Matacos. Higher up, that is in our Bolivian Itiyuro, they again take the name of Matacos." [610]

"The fact is then that they do not have what might be called [197] a separate language--rather do they vary the pronunciation of certain terms which does not constitute a separate language but a local variation, as happens with the Spanish of Bolivians, Argentines, Chilians, etc., and between town and town, region and region."

This description was sent to me when I asked for a Pater-noster in Mataguayo, having already received one in Nocten.

114 All that has been transcribed in the previous chapters shows that in the opinion of the missionary fathers the typical tribe was the Nocten, and that this is the name they use where we would say Matacos and Mataguayos. It is to be understood, then, that Nocten is nothing but a corruption of the name Tonocoté or Toconoté, already mentioned.

XX

Geographic Distribution of Mataco-type Nations

101 131 From all that has been told us by the Fathers of the Company and of the Franciscan Missions it can be deduced that the Mataco tribes occupy a diagonal region which in times past extended from the basin

1: Pelleschi--56 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1876 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

XXI

Ethnology of the Mataco-Tonocoté Nation or People

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101 If it is difficult to fix the point or home territory of the Matacos, it is no less difficult to determine their ethnic origin. We lack the first requirement which is the craniology of these Indians: without that information we shall not be able to advance far, but we can at least go a little way by means of the language.

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197 Basing my assertions on what will later be said regarding the language, I find that in the Chaco, as in the rest of America, the languages can be grouped grammatically into two large families. The one suffixes its pronominal particles, the other prefixes them. The former is represented by the nations which are Guaraní-like, and I therefore call it Atlantic, while the latter is made up of Quichua-like nations, for which reason I call it Andean or Pacific.

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197 Holding to this classification, the Matacos as pure prefixers of the majority of pronominal particles,can be neither Lules, nor Vilelas, nor Quichuas, nor Aucasni, nor Aymaraes, since all these languages suffix these particles.

In spite of everything there exist among the Matacos and Lules certain lexical analogies which lead one to suspect some mixture, which would then certainly explain that greater placidity which is characteristic of both nations in the midst of the ferocious Guaycurues of the other parts of the Chaco. [612]

These analogies between Lules and Matacos are only of single words, but the pronouns and their particles are separated, "toto orbe." The same does not occur between the Mataco and the Quichua or Aymará: the first and second person primitive pronouns are somewhat more than merely similar, and this is reason enough to recognize that there was some original contact between the two peoples, though it is true that the Matacos are more backward.

To say that any given grouping of American Indians is of mixed origin is to come close to the truth, for in all probability not one is to be found which is not. In the present instance and judging from the point of view of linguistics, I tend to believe that the Mataco has in it some Lule and some Quichua.

This is not enough. In the reports which preface this study we have seen that the Matacos and Guaycurú-Tobas always go about together,

197 and we are assured that they differed more in language than in their manner and customs, that is to say, that they had in them a good bit of Toba, Mocoví and Abipón. This, linguistically speaking is a fact, for those differences to which the missionaries made reference are lexical rather than grammatical in character. Pronouns, their particles, suffixes of plurality, all point to a common origin, that is, to hybridization.

It is common knowledge that the Matacos and Tobas always went about together, as though they recognized their kinship.

[174] These considerations induce me to believe that the Matacos are the offspring of Guaycurú fathers and Lule mothers; and the Tobas, a mixture of Guaycurúes and Matacos.

The Guaycurúes are related linguistically to the Guaraníes, and these, in turn, to the Caribes and Mojo-Maypures, and they may also be related to the Matacos.

That Mataco has some Guaraní and Chaquense (Guaycurú, Toba, Mocoví, etc. tribes) is to be gathered since all of them prefix their pronominal particles; but the strange thing is that Quichua also has a place here, it being of all the most prone to suffixing.

All these linguistic anomalies can be explained if we admit 174 what Montecinos says, that approximately since 500 B.C. to about 500 A.D. there were successive massive invasions of Perú from Brasil and Tucumán.

Observation teaches us that first and second person singular 197 pronouns and first (excluding the hearer) [613] person plural, correspond 174 to the predominant group, be it by conquest or for some other reason. It is precisely in these persons that the analogy between Quichua and Mataco are most exact, it being only proper to give warning that Mataco, like Mojo, is logical even in its possessive particles, a phenomenon which does not occur in Quichua. (1)

1. Because "Ñokha" is--"I"; "y" subfixed--"my" or "mine," in Quichua.

Aymará and Araucano register the same pronominal influence and such analogies lead us to seek craniological proof, and also to study Mataco along with Quichua Aymará and Araucano.

Let us suppose that the Chaco, or rather the highlands which sur- 174 round it, had been occupied by tribes corresponding to those we call Lules

114 can tell us more than that it existed.

It is hard to understand how the Mataco texts of Jesuit Mission times could have disappeared so completely, a thing lamented over by Machoni more than half a century before the suppression of the order.

I cannot believe that there does not exist, somewhere, a written record of some sort regarding it, and I do not despair of being able to run it down; but for the time being I must limit myself to the works of Father Romedí (of the Seraphic Order), to the notes which were presented to me by the Franciscan College of Tarija and finally and in the place of honor as it were, the field notes of engineer Juan Pelleschi. (1)

1. When I wrote this the Vejoz manuscript had not come into my hands.

In the chapters which treat the subject of the history of the Tonocotés it seems to be proved that the Tonocotés, Mataguayos, Matacos, and the Mocovi-type Guaycurú tribes, were groupings of one single race, which spoke different dialects but which had a great deal in common.

•197 We know now that the Noctenes, Mataguayos, and Matacos are tribes of the same family and speak dialects which are as similar to each other as are Portuguese and Spanish. These dialects, by their grammatical construction can in no way be confused with the Lule of Machoni, since the former prefix their pronominal particles while the latter suffix them.

114 Hervas and Jolís (2) have disproved Machoni's theory that

2. In Italian, as in Latin, "J" sounds like "Y."

[616] the Tonocotés who spoke Lule had taken refuge in the Pilcomayo River basin. Neither at that time nor at the present has any tribe been discovered to correspond to Machoni's Lules in that area, but there do exist there many of the Nocten, Mataco and Mataguayo type whom I suppose to be the real Tonocotés or Toconotés.

193 From the most cursory examination of the Mataco or Mataguayo, or Nocten tongue it is evident that it is a language which prefixes its pronominal particles, while the Lule has just as strong a bent towards suffixing them.

197 [114] This fact alone is sufficient to separate Mataco from Lule with a barrier which is not to be bridged by Father Machoni's brief and indirect reference. This does not mean that I deny that Mataco and Lule may share common words—these analogies will be noted later—but the grammatical mechanism and the pronouns themselves point in absolutely opposite directions.

Following the classification which we have been setting down in this study, Mataco corresponds to the Atlantic type insofar as the position of affixes is concerned, although it is my impression that it leans more closely towards the Moja branch than towards the Guaraní, in spite of the greater immediacy of the latter.

114 197 Before proceeding further let us examine the arguments on which Machoni rests his hypothesis that the Tonocoté of Techo and others is really Lule:

In the first place the Lule language is not widespread but limited to the five nations: Lule, Isistiné, Toquistiné, Oristiné (1)

1. The Missionaries of whom Hervas made enquiries deny that there be Oristinés.

and Tonocoté. The Tonocotés numbered 60,000 souls. (Machoni's prologue.)

Secondly, the Tonocotés in the XVII century lived near Concepción del Bermejo and were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena and Anasco. These Indians taking offense at the Spaniards, went off to the banks of the Yabebirí and Pilcomayo Rivers. Ibid.

Thirdly the Lules, Isistinés, Toquistines and Oristinés were evangelized by Fathers Bárcena, Monroy and Viana in 1589 and visited by Saint Francisco Solano. Ibid.

In the fourth place the Isistinés, Toquistinés and Oristinés fled to the Chaco and there remained for over a hundred years until in 1710 they came before don Esteban de Urizar y Arespacochaga who placed them in the Valbuena and Miraflores reservations; Father Machoni was with them for 9 years. [617]

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197 In the fifth place, Bárcena compiled a grammar and vocabulary of the language of these Indians when he evangelized the Tonocotés and Lules. Machoni confesses that nothing remains of this grammar other than the mention of its existence which appears in the missionary's biography. Ibid.

Conclusión: Ergo this Lule tongue is Tonocoté, common to the aforementioned five nations, and used by the Matará nation and many others of the Chaco for the sole reason that they are neighbors of the Tonocotés and Lules and trade with them.

Regarding all this series of non sequiturs Fathers Yolis [sic] and Hervás have given full account. Machoni confesses that nothing remained of Tonocoté other than the unconnected bits of information which he reports, which certainly have no philological interest whatever.

The Lules of Machoni may or may not be those referred to by Father Techo, but with regard to the Tonocotés Machoni has not given the least proof that they are the Lules; and it goes without saying that the language which he called Lule cannot possibly be stretched to include the Tonocotés.

Even as regards the work of the missionaries this identification of Lules and Tonocotés was unfortunate, for in that region of the Pilcomayo live the Noctenes, Matacos, Mataguayos and Tobas, for whom the Lule tongue is hardly the one to be recommended as common currency.

Had Hervás known about the prefixing character of the Mataguayo and Nocten etc. languages, he would have been even harsher in his criticism of the Lules-Tonocotés of Father Machioni [sic].

Being, as he certainly was, a good philologist he would have known that in a hundred years a suffixing language could hardly change over into being a prefixing one. This violent change is not to be found in any of the other Chaco languages. The Toba of today is the same as the Toba of Bárcena's time, and so also are the other languages.

197 It must be conceded then that the Lule of Machoni was not and could never possibly be the Tonocoté of the early missions.

Since we know that the Mataguayos spoke Tonocoté in the period about which we are writing, and that at the present time Noctenes, Mataguayos, Matacos and many other tribes speak dialects of Mataco,

until the contrary is proved we must suppose that Mataco is Tonocoté.
●197 A language as strongly rooted as this one could not possibly have become lost in the Chaco.

The Mataco language is one of the most widely used languages and is spoken by the largest grouping [618] of Indians in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos, and yet we do not find it mentioned in any writings. One can therefore only deduce that the language of the Matacos is Tonocoté; this being the only rational hypothesis which for the present fits the case.

As far as languages go we can state that what the Mojos are to the Chiquitos, the Matacos are to the Chaco tribes of the Toba-Mocoví type, and just as the former have their Mosetana tribes so the latter have their Lules and Vilelas.

XXIII

Regarding the Names Tonocoté, Mataco and Mataguayo

101 Nothing better has been written about this than what Hervás has set down in his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" (Catalogue of Languages) on pages 168 and 172. He asserts that the Tonocotés are the Indians called Matarás and says the following:- "Matarás is a Peruvian word which is used to signify a grass which in Spanish is often called "espadaña," etc. The words Tonocot and Toconoté (read Tonocoté) have no meaning whatever in the Lule language, according to the missionaries to the Lule nation, who have told me that they have never heard that the Tonocotés or the Matarás (who are really the Toconotés) (1) were in any way related to the Lules. Yet the Indians

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1. Hervas always writes Toconoté instead of Tonocoté.

consider other tribes related to theirs when they speak the same language; a missionary to the Matarás has told me that he heard his Indians speak, on occasion, a language which was unknown to him and that when he had inquired as to what language it was he learned that it was an ancient language of the Matarás; but since this

1:Pelleschi--68 C-5 (ca 1875) 1876 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

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[173] The Mataco Indians and their Language

by
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PART ONE

Chapter I

Geographic Situation

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The Matacos are hemmed in on the West by the Salta border line and on the East by the Toba frontier. Caught thus between two enemies, they have of necessity formed alliances, the Eastern Matacos with the Tobas and the Western Matacos with the white colonists, each group warring upon the other. In spite of this division the Matacos hold to their common language jealously, although it is true that there are slight dialectal differences to be noted. Thus, for example, the Eastern Matacos almost invariably say "quiá" and "tzá" where their Western counterparts would say "chá," regardless of the fact that any one of these expressions is employed without difficulty by members of the same tribe. The same happens with "quió," "tzó," "chó"; for example: "doe" can be "tzonaj," "quionáj."

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Each nation of Indians has its own territory and will go to war over the smallest patch of land just as we would. The land is also subdivided among the tribes of one nation and these may not overstep their bounds without causing war. These wars are very frequent for the many reasons set down elsewhere and because of the marauding spirit which dominates the Indians -- thus it is that whenever they learn that a tribe [174] has become rich, for one reason or another, in animals or

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

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guaya moderna is essentially a compilation founded on the works of Campos, Cardús, and other writers [1]). The same holds true of the monograph of Father Ducci which, besides, only deals with one sub-tribe of the Tobas on the lower Pilcomayo. [2])

The ethnological studies of the Toba tribe contained in this book mainly refer, as appears from my previous statements, to the Bolivian Tobas, but also to the Toba Pilagá of Argentine. I met the latter at the sugar factories of Esperanza in June 1912, and moreover, some of my Indian informants in Bolivia were from Argentine or had lived among their kinsmen there. The general culture of the Pilagá, as already pointed out, is much the same as that of the Bolivian Tobas, although on the whole they seem to have preserved their old customs better than the latter.

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The third tribe visited by me were the *Mataco*. Next to the Tobas, the Mataco form the largest of the Argentine Chaco tribes, but only a part of them may still be said to live in a state of nature. Three principal Mataco tribes can be distinguished. One of them inhabits the corner in northern Argentine roughly limited by Tartagal in the west and Rio Bermejo — an affluent of the Pilcomayo — in the south. These Mataco are called Vejós and are those most strongly influenced by civilization. The second tribe, known under the name of Mataco-Guisnay, lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo about ten leagues south of Fortín Guachalla. The third tribe, called Mataco-Nocténes — occupies the great triangle roughly formed by lines connecting the villages Yacuiba, Villa Montes, and Crevaux. Those Nocténes who live on the right bank of the Pilcomayo, between Villa Montes and Crevaux, have preserved their original culture best. Among these Indians I spent about one month in October and November 1912. They are culturally closely related to the Tobas living on the other side of the river, and intermarriage between the two tribes is frequent. Still the Nocténes speak their own language which, apart from certain dialectal differences, is the same as that spoken by the Vejós and the Guisnay. The Mataco language shows great affinity to the Choroti language which justifies us in referring both tribes to one and the same principal group. A third Chaco tribe of the same group are probably the Ashluslay, the language of which is unfortunately so far quite unknown to us.

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[1]) Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya moderna*. Asunción, 1900.

[2]) Fray Zacarias Ducci, *Los Tobas de Taccagalé con arte y vocabulario Toba-castellano*. Buenos Aires, 1904.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

~ on a vowel indicates nasalization.
' on a vowel marks the accentuation.

As far as possible I tried to give the pronunciation of the region of Embarcación, though Pedro spoke another dialect.

A. THE UNIVERSE

1. The Upper and the Lower World (Pedro)

There are two worlds, one above and the other below. Once the world above our heads was in the place of the earth where we live. But the earth (still further) below did not like to be soiled by the excrement of the people dwelling in the sky and therefore it changed places with the earth above. Formerly sky and earth were connected by a big tree (*niLɔk*). The men of this earth climbed up it and went to hunt in the world above. Once a number of them climbed up and succeeded in killing a jaguar. When they divided the meat, they foolishly gave the stomach to an old man. He was so indignant at getting such a miserable portion that he burned the tree, thereby avenging himself. The men who had climbed up could not get down and they still live in the sky. They are a constellation formed by many stars (Pleiades: *patseLai*).

When these first people went to the sky to hunt, they left their children at home. A mother, knowing she would never again rejoin her child on earth, threw him from the sky a deer skin bag filled with honey. The children grew up, they were our fathers.

2. The Compartments of the World (Pedro)

The world is divided into three compartments; the earth the sky and the underworld. In the underworld there are fields like those we have here. The underworld is the abode of the dead. We know it is because we can go there in our dreams to visit our dead relatives. The medicine-men also

Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 179 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171]

M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make <u>chicha</u> because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

Choroti SI6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464]

In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101

These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197

They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224

Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756]

They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

In order to gather together in a common place, in addition to the tracks they leave they twist branches and handsful of grass at crossroads in order that their companions may know where to find them, they having prearranged the meaning of the signs.

[193] Another means of communication is by making fires. During our traveling about the Chaco we were continually surrounded by fires, either at close quarters or far away, fires which sometimes took on the proportions of colossal blazes. And often, when we thought that we were in absolute solitude, it would happen that upon approaching an Indian village we would be informed that we were expected, and we would hear tell of the order which had been observed in our march.

They make use, moreover, of many spies and informers. In Mataco the former are called niguaiecque, and the latter gu'éicáss.

They apparently do have some sort of tactical organization: thus they have a general chief, subordinate chief and petty chieftains. The first is called, in Mataco, canniat tizán, the second, canniat, and as for the last, I have forgotten.

The general chiefs are chosen at second remove, that is, from among the subordinate chiefs, who, in turn, are elected by the people. Normally a marked preference is shown for the late chief's sons, provided they be of age, courageous and good. But then, of course, we must say that in these elections the same passions are present which appear amongst us in our elections.

They also have another category of persons, whom they call nyát and corresponds vaguely to the Spanish "caballero" or the "galantuomo" of southern Italy. So it is that they refer to any white persons whom they consider of quality with the name nyát. It is to be supposed that a like distinction is made among the other Indians. In Peru and wherever the Quechua language is spoken, gentlemen are called Viracocha.

Once the general chief has been elected the subordinate elector chiefs go to call on him when they can, which visits are celebrated with the accustomed drinking and eating orgies. A general chieftainship almost always embraces villages far removed from each other.

The Matacos call those who visit them tzicki-ác.

The authorities among the Chaco Indians play an almost purely military role. In peace time they lose practically all their prestige,

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gesticulations, must be a whole sentence. Even though a great deal of time has elapsed I think I can still explain them and not fall into error as I do so.

"One" is hoté-cuuaj 'hi, and one finger is raised. One can also say hoteji and hotecoaji. Now hoté means "as," cuuáj means "finger," and hi (nasal h) is a particle which indicates possession, container etc. so, not worrying too much about this small elemental difference which is so common in every language, and especially in this one which undergoes so many shifts, we may say that the translation of hotécuaji is: "as finger has" ("this which I show").

"Two" is hoté quuasi, and two fingers are raised. Quuas is the plural, so to speak, of cuoaj according to this tongue, and thus the translation of the above is "as fingers has."

"Three" is laj tdi qua yél, and three fingers are raised, the little finger remaining folded and covered by the left hand. Now laj means "without" or "no"; el means "other"; quai is too similar to quoají to allow for doubt, and so we may say that the translation is "without the other finger." The same may be said for lája echecuoya -- "widower without a husband" [sic].

"Four" is tdi qualéss híquí and I don't know how to go about translating it literally and so shall not try. However one can perceive that in qualéss there is a plural iqui form, which is a word that often accompanies hi, and which [258] is to be found in phrases in which we have the idea of "to be" expressed, with other analogous ones -- it is therefore probable that it refers to the gestures which go with each numeral.

These gestures were not made only by that chief but also by other Indians of the central Chaco and by Faustino who could count as well as any of us. There must be some relation between the gestures and the words. The etymologies which I offer, in my opinion, explain the case more satisfactorily than those which are usually given in analogous philological problems.

However, one must not judge the worth and elegance of the original by the literal translations. Where would the elegance of most compound words be if we translated their Greek originals directly? For example; "Panorama" -- "all seen....!!"

And as far as the intellectual value of this manner of expressing numerals is concerned, is its genesis not quite natural? The Guaraní

In order to gather together in a common place, in addition to the tracks they leave they twist branches and handsful of grass at crossroads in order that their companions may know where to find them, they having prearranged the meaning of the signs. 487 201

[193] Another means of communication is by making fires. During our traveling about the Chaco we were continually surrounded by fires, either at close quarters or far away, fires which sometimes took on the proportions of colossal blazes. And often, when we thought that we were in absolute solitude, it would happen that upon approaching an Indian village we would be informed that we were expected, and we would hear tell of the order which had been observed in our march. Dur-201

They make use, moreover, of many spies and informers. In Mataco the former are called niguaiecque, and the latter gu'éicáss. 701 [203]

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They also have another category of persons, whom they call nyát and corresponds vaguely to the Spanish "caballero" or the "galantuomo" of southern Italy. So it is that they refer to any white persons whom they consider of quality with the name nyát. It is to be supposed that a like distinction is made among the other Indians. In Peru and wherever the Quechua language is spoken, gentlemen are called Viracocha. [559] [609]

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114 down on the field, from the reports of excellent informants. They have been obtained in San Andres and Yuto, on the Pilcomayo river, and in San Patricio, on the river Bermejo.

Birth and Infancy

842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this s considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to
721 the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting;
262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of
[227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness
231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from
241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they
579 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
●221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
535 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

101 131 of the Salado (1) River to the Pilcomayo, hemmed in towards the

1. From Matará northwards.

mountains by tribes of Quichua influence and others, and in the direction of the Río de la Plata by nations of the Toba-Guaycurú type. This vast region was bounded on the north by Chiriguano territory, and on the south by the Quichuas and Pampas of the Guaycurú-Querandí type.

It appears at present that the basin of the Salado River ceased 174 to be territory of the nomad Matacos who, in the past century, were replaced by the Mocovíes and other tribes of a more definite Guycurú type. Lozano in his first volume and on page 175 (Lamas Ed.) says that "gasta" means town in the Tonocoté language. This being the case these tribes must have entered the valleys of Yocavil and Londres also, for all the Andean region is full of places whose names end in "gasta" (2). According to my observations "gasta" is as Cacan a word

2. In none of the Mataco-Mataguayo dialects does the term "gasta" appear.

as is "ao."

In any case one thing must needs be conceded and that is that the Mataco tribes had shifted towards the southwest up to the Aconquija range. [611]

● 221 The Matacos, like the Tobas and other Guaycurú nations are and were nomads, and of course one cannot indicate exactly the areas frequented by them when they were on the move; at one time they would go in one direction, at another in another, according to pressure from more warlike tribes or from the Spaniards.

221 All agree that after the Spanish conquest numerous tribes of 174 Matacos or Tonocotes withdrew towards the Pilcomayo River basin and this is exactly what would have been expected because there they were less exposed to Spanish raiders who would carry off any Indian they found to forced labor; these they used to call piezas "pieces of ordinance"--Translator].

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Tramlator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[264] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Tramlator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 ● 222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
● 222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 262 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her hut and she, after having set aside enough for the suttenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense--sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[289] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
535 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

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All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

this shared work has its cause in that the last two mentioned products must necessarily be gathered within a certain limited period and therefore the Indians have need of the combined effort of all the workers they can muster in order to harvest all they possibly can. 222 462

For the making of nets they must first, naturally, begin by making twine, which they call niñ'hiôi. They get their textile material from a bromelia which in Quechua is called châguar (a name now also used by the white settlers) and in Mataco hûié. They steep the leaves of this plant in water for a time and then comb them with a clam shell. Once this has been done the residue is put out into the sun to dry and whiten. The last stage is that of twisting the fiber -- a wad of it is held in the left hand and rubbed back and forth [182] on a leg, upon which they sprinkle a little gypsum in order to avoid getting hurt. This gypsum powder is called maccotâc-muc. 283

The twine being thus ready they make not only nets with it but also ropes, which they call niñ'hioi-less, which means family or skein of threads.

Some of the Indians have special skill in making weapons, and make them as a means of barter with their companions. They use a very hard wood for the bow, and ostrich [rhea--Translator] tendons or strips of hide for the string. The arrow shaft is made of cane, the head of some hard wood, often tipped with bone and barbed like a fish hook. 411

Chapter V

Marriage Customs

Those who do not know anything about the Indians may believe that they lead morally and materially sterile lives. Yet this is not actually the case: the savage loves, hates and knows what ambition, enjoyments, dangers and glory are. He is acquainted with religion and with fear. In these primitive societies the whole gamut of human affections is experienced precisely "as among the whites," as Faustino used to say to me when I asked him about the intimate experiences of the Indian way of life. 152

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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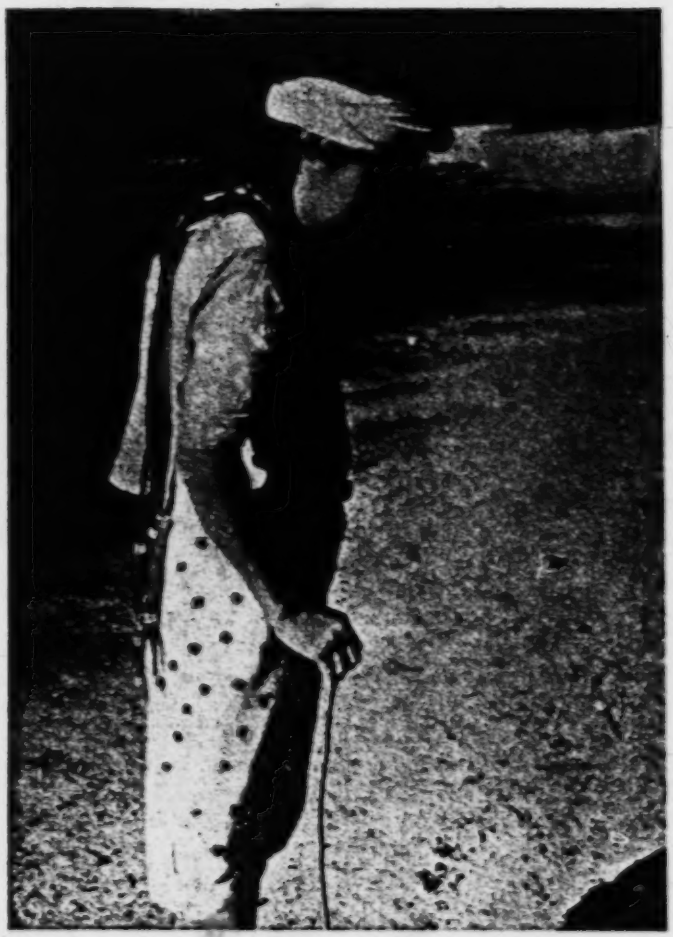

Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *cavagnatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

[222]
[415]

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

M 241 seldom allows them to reach maturity. Besides the drought, birds, ants, locusts and rats often destroy the crops. The same fruits and cereals are cultivated by the Mataco and the Tobas in Bolivia, maize and manioc however with greater success than among the Choroti, since the climate there is more favourable. On the whole, the Chaco tribes are greatly dependent for their subsistence on the crops nature spontaneously gives them, and the great rôle that wild fruits like the algaroba, the chañar, the tusca, and a few others play in the economic life of these Indians has already been mentioned. It is mainly owing to these useful trees that the interior parts of the Chaco are habitable for people living in a state of nature.

T 241 184 439 The Bolivian Tobas, although they cultivate maize on a small scale, still get their main supply of this important cereal from the Avas in the north, with whom they carry on a sort of trade. Generally they get the maize in exchange for dried fish, which they store in considerable quantities during the summer season.

M T C 226 Fishing is the main occupation of the tribes living on the River Pilcomayo, and these Indians are therefore never seriously threatened by starvation. During the rainy season, when the river is swollen, fishing is often impossible; the proper season begins in April or May when the water is low and fish appear in abundance along the banks of the river. All Pilcomayo tribes use nets made of *caraguatá* fibres and of a peculiar triangular form, and since they have no canoes or vessels of any kind they always catch the fish by swimming and diving, in which they display remarkable skill. The Tobas, who are particularly skilled fishermen, use not only nets, but also, and I believe more commonly, bow and arrrows, a method only occasionally practised by the Choroti and the Mataco. When the Indians have caught a fish they instantly kill it with a small club of palo santo if it is a large one, if it is of a smaller kind simply by biting the head.

T 251 438 During a big fishing expedition the Indians, at any rate the Tobas, sometimes catch fish in enormous quantities. They preserve them by roasting, then store them in special shelters, formed of a roof made of reeds and palm-leaves resting on four poles. This dried fish forms an important article of exchange among the Tobas.

● M T C ● 224 Next to fishing, hunting is the most important means of subsistence of the Chaco Indians, but in this respect also the Choroti and Mataco are inferior to the Tobas. Especially the Choroti seemed to me to be poor hunters. In the parts of the Chaco inhabited by these Indians game is scarce, and with their comparatively small bows and arrows they only

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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Choroti SK 6

M I C 224 C [362]

rarely succeed in killing a tapir, a deer, or a wild pig. Besides, the deer is an animal of which the Choroti have a superstitious fear, and its flesh is never eaten by them; when they kill one, they only keep the hoofs, which are used as magical rattles, the leg-bones, of which instruments used for ceremonial blood-letting are made, and the skin which is used for different purposes. Of birds, as I have stated before, the ostrich is especially appreciated both on account of its flesh and its plumes, which play a great role as personal ornaments and to which magical power is ascribed. In hunting the ostrich the Choroti, like other Chaco tribes, avail themselves of the trick of binding palm leaves together and placing them on the head and shoulders so as to resemble a young tree. Disguised in this way, the Indians generally succeed in getting within easy range of the shy bird, and are thus able to bring it down with their arrows. Another trick of which the Indians often make use in hunting is that of imitating the cry of certan animals and birds by means of round wooden whistles, particularly invented for this purpose. With the same whistles, which are supposed to possess magic power, they also imitate the supposed whistling sound of the spirits, which are thereby frightened away.

T 224

The Tobas are much more skilled hunters than the Choroti and the Mataco, and, at least in Bolivia, the country inhabited by these Indians is comparatively rich in game. Thus tapirs, deer, and wild pigs, of which latter there are two varieties, are frequent in the forests, and the Tobas hunt them eagerly, using bows and arrows as well as lances as weapons. All Indians, and particularly the Tobas, are expert in stalking ainmals; the latter are thereby aided by their dogs which are specially trained for the hunting of the wild pig. Even the jaguar and the puma are hunted by the Tobas with dogs.

M I C 231

Of domestic animals the Chaco Indians keep dogs, sheep and goats as well as fowls. [1] Horses were long ago introduced among the Tobas who

[1] Nordenskiöld, when treating of the domestic animals of the Bolivian Indians in his *Ethnography of South America seen from Mojos in Bolivia*, p. 114, amongst other things mentions that in Mojos only the civilized Indians keep cattle, which have been introduced by the whites, and adds the following erroneous statements as regards the Chaco Indians: »In the Chaco, on the other hand, *even the independent Indians have cattle* which play an important part for them. *The Indians keep no sheep or goats*». I wish to point out that neither the Tobas nor the Choroti, nor the Mataco on the Pilcomayo keep cattle. On the other hand, sheep and goats are kept by *all* Pilcomayo tribes and, as far as I know, by all other Chaco Indians, except perhaps some savage tribes in the interior of the unknown Chaco.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 ●224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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000 ance. The older Indians still knew that the object of the dance at which this dress was worn was to conjure the spirits of the dead, the *añas*, who were believed to come in great numbers to the annual drinking-feasts with the intention of taking part in these joyful entertainments. But the ostrich dress was not the only thing worn on these occasions. Masks were also worn and rattles of hard shells were tied round the legs. The masks and the rattles, together with the ostrich dress and the *yandúa*, formed a real magical apparatus intended to drive off and conjure the unwelcome guests. We know that masks are especially worn by the Indians at death-feasts and that they are, or at least originally have been, purely magical things comparable to drums, rattles, etc., with which supernatural beings are influenced. Even in our days the Avas and Chané use masks at the carnival of the whites in connection with the dance performed on that occasion. They are rudely carved out of a soft kind of wood into the likeness of a human face and are afterwards, according to a common Indian custom, thrown away or destroyed. The mask, which has been tabooed or infected because of its contact with the dangerous spirits, can no longer be used.

The participation of the half-civilised Indians, with their native religious ceremonies, in the carnival of the whites, is an interesting phenomenon. It shows us the amalgamation of a Christian and a purely heathen festival, an amalgamation which of course is psychologically possible only under the assumption that there is an intrinsic connection between them.

226 535 As to the magical dances of the Chaco Indians, I may mention that the Mataco and the Choroti have a dance, the particular object of which is to secure good luck in fishing. The Mataco call this ceremonial dance *Vúokoi*, the Choroti again *Siyúhs*. *Siyúhs* is the name of the kind of fish called *bocachico* in Spanish, the most common fish in the Pilcomayo river. Fishing is the main livelihood of the tribes who have settled on the banks of the river, and the fishing season proper begins at the end of May or the beginning of June, when the dry season in the strict sense begins and the water in the river is low. I have not seen this dance performed, I have only been told about it by the Indians. It is a sort of ring-dance, the Indians making movements in quick time round a live fish placed on the ground, while an Indian standing outside the circle tries to catch the fish. Immediately after the dance is finished the Indians run down to the river, and, thanks to the dance, will have good luck. The dance is believed to have the power of making the fish

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets.

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Atúshe*, when the young men try to »hurry on» the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the »power» lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings.

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: »These spirits . . . fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the tolderias (villages) or round the toldos (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm.»[1] This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible.

[1]) Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting; 221 262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of [227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness 231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from 241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

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of view this practice of no quarter for prisoners has far reaching effects upon racial distribution, for the victors, in either pitched battles or in contests of intelligence, take the place of and completely supplant the vanquished, thus carrying out that process of selection, which is basic to the Darwinian theory, and which is behind the gradual betterment of the racial strains in the whole organic kingdom, to which end all struggle for life may be reduced to the expression mors tua vita mea.

It has been said that the American Indians have been avenged of the conquest and of our introduction of smallpox by making a present to the Europeans of venereal disease.

I think that this is one of those assertions which are often made without sufficient proof, and which can easily be disproved. I have been told that qualified researchers have shown that this disease harks back to remote antiquity. Popular opinion (often wrong) has as a matter of course claimed it to be of French origin; and historians, in all seriousness, attribute it to the period in which Charles VIII invaded Italy. Whoever cares to accept this ought first to take a look at Chapter XV in the Book of Leviticus.

Actually, this disease is unknown among the Chaco Indians; or at least this was so until it was introduced by the white invaders. And although this could be explained by saying that a plague tends to disappear or to become attenuated after it has run its course and harvested those who had a predisposition for it -- which is the scientific theory held today by the new school of medicine and which in fact, so it seems to me, jibes with the Darwinian Theory of selection -- the facts are as I have reported them. What is more, in those localities where this disease exists the Indians are quite as prone to fall to it as are others, while African Negros seem either not to catch it or else to get it in a mild form. This is common knowledge among the gauchos of the plains [219] wherever the presence of these two races has made the observation of this fact possible. I set this down here in case it may be of use to those who have not observed it or who are ignorant of it.

These Indians are nomadic, as we know, and do not have domestic animals. The few they do have have come to them from us, and this exception merely substantiates the rule.

Even at the time of the initial conquest of these lands the white invaders were surprised at the lack of domestic animals among the Indians, and this not in one or two places but over the whole continent, a state of affairs such that it has attracted the attention of historians and philosophers, from Robertson to Humboldt, and from the latter to the most modest of travelers. 231

In point of fact nomadism has existed and still exists in Asia, nevertheless domestic animals were and are there much in evidence: the horse and the camel, for example. Have not the Lapps, the Samoyeds, and the Chukchee tamed the reindeer? And have the natives of the Kamchatka peninsula not tamed the dogs they hitch to their sleighs?

To what then are we to attribute this indubitable inferiority in the American nomad? Certainly not to the race's lack of ability -- an answer which might arise from a superficial and cursory acquaintance with them -- for if that were so then the Greenlanders ought not to have domestic animals, as the American Eskimo do not, despite being of the same stock and having the bison, similar to our ox and tamable, in their midst in the polar region.

Furthermore, the matter of domesticating animals which are tamable does not present any sort of problem requiring superior capabilities. Actually it cannot be denied that these nomads do have something similar to domestic animals, for the truth is that the Chaco Indians have always had and certainly have now either a tame ostrich [rhea--Translator], or a chuña, or a charata (woods chicken), and we know that the barkless dog was found to be in domesticity among them.

It is my opinion that the lack of domestic animals is due to three special circumstances existing on this continent and among its inhabitants. These circumstances are: physical conditions, social conditions, and the scarcity or complete lack of tamable animals.

It is well known that on this continent, owing to certain quite easily explainable physical causes, it is colder than it is in the old world at the same geographic latitude, which makes the temperate zone here much smaller than over there. For this reason it must have been much more difficult to care and get sufficient fodder for domestic animals up there among the inhabitants of North America where the bison is to be found.

Even had this difficulty not existed, the social organization 231
of the American nomads made the keeping of domesticated animals well nigh impossible. In [220] effect, and in spite of the fact that one nation might occupy an immense area, yet it would be divided into small tribes who owned sway over relatively small territories and were (as their survivors still are) continually at war amongst themselves. It follows from this that there was no security, which is an indispensable condition for the raising of animals and for any other peaceful occupation. Even at the present time the Chaco Indians, although they are acquainted with our domestic animals and do on occasion try to raise them, do not do so on a worthwhile scale because the mere fact of their possessing them is a temptation for their neighbors to invade and despoil them. If social life had somehow got to the point of compelling these Indians to gather into large groupings, then, given the range of their vast territories and despite their being nomadic and continually at war, it would always have been easy for them to protect their animals, when invaded, by fencing them into inclosures.

Can the Indians of these parts have been cannibals? This is 266
a question which always arises when we have dealings with savages like these.

In America cannibalism has had adherents among "Hebrews and Samaritans," among "Barbarians and Christians." The savage Caribs and the cultured Mexicans topped off the very best dishes of their cuisine with human flesh. The peaceful Peruvians used not to disdain stews of human blood for their religious feast days, in which they would knead corn bread with the blood taken from the foreheads of babes -- what pious butchers were the gentle and beautiful women devotees of that nation's religion.

In this region of the Chaco, although cannibalism may have been practiced, temporibus illis, (which cannot be proved), at the present time it is either non-existent or else must be considered reduced to its very lowest terms. 727

I shall say nothing about the custom of drinking aloja from 264
the scalp of a prisoner which has been converted into a propitiating cup of vengeance and victory.

I have seen them drink avidly of the blood of cattle 262
slaughtered for our use, but they do not feed exclusively on cattle 272

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

M T C 224 C [262]

rarely succeed in killing a tapir, a deer, or a wild pig. Besides, the deer is an animal of which the Choroti have a superstitious fear, and its flesh is never eaten by them; when they kill one, they only keep the hoofs, which are used as magical rattles, the leg-bones, of which instruments used for ceremonial blood-letting are made, and the skin which is used for different purposes. Of birds, as I have stated before, the ostrich is especially appreciated both on account of its flesh and its plumes, which play a great role as personal ornaments and to which magical power is ascribed. In hunting the ostrich the Choroti, like other Chaco tribes, avail themselves of the trick of binding palm leaves together and placing them on the head and shoulders so as to resemble a young tree. Disguised in this way, the Indians generally succeed in getting within easy range of the shy bird, and are thus able to bring it down with their arrows. Another trick of which the Indians often make use in hunting is that of imitating the cry of certan animals and birds by means of round wooden whistles, particularly invented for this purpose. With the same whistles, which are supposed to possess magic power, they also imitate the supposed whistling sound of the spirits, which are thereby frightened away.

T 224

The Tobas are much more skilled hunters than the Choroti and the Mataco, and, at least in Bolivia, the country inhabited by these Indians is comparatively rich in game. Thus tapirs, deer, and wild pigs, of which latter there are two varieties, are frequent in the forests, and the Tobas hunt them eagerly, using bows and arrows as well as lances as weapons. All Indians, and particularly the Tobas, are expert in stalking ainmals; the latter are thereby aided by their dogs which are specially trained for the hunting of the wild pig. Even the jaguar and the puma are hunted by the Tobas with dogs.

M T C 231

Of domestic animals the Chaco Indians keep dogs, sheep and goats as well as fowls. [1] Horses were long ago introduced among the Tobas who

[1] Nordenskiöld, when treating of the domestic animals of the Bolivian Indians in his *Ethnography of South America seen from Mojos in Bolivia*, p. 114, amongst other things mentions that in Mojos only the civilized Indians keep cattle, which have been introduced by the whites, and adds the following erroneous statements as regards the Chaco Indians: »In the Chaco, on the other hand, *even the independent Indians have cattle* which play an important part for them. *The Indians keep no sheep or goats.* I wish to point out that neither the Tobas nor the Choroti, nor the Mataco on the Pilcomayo keep cattle. On the other hand, sheep and goats are kept by *all* Pilcomayo tribes and, as far as I know, by all other Chaco Indians, except perhaps some savage tribes in the interior of the unknown Chaco.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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soon became skilled riders, but among the other Pilcomayo tribes they are rare. Before the Chaco Indian became acquainted with the white man, the dog was the only domestic animal known to him. These half-starved, fierce, and treacherous dogs are a real nuisance in the Mataco and the Choroti villages to the white traveller who has to stay among the Indians, because in their hunger they are always on the alert to rob him of edible things, among which they include not only his provisions, but also his saddlegear, boots, and other leather goods. Although the Mataco and the Choroti treat their numerous dogs badly and evidently have little use for them even as watches, yet in a way they regard them as members of the tribe. They never kill a dog, however old and wretched it may be, and when it dies they lament over it just as they lament over a fellow-tribesman. This curious practice is due to superstitious reasons, fear of the spirit of the dog. Like many other South American Indians, the natives of the Chaco believe that the souls of their dead tribesmen may reincarnate themselves in the dogs.

Only the Tobas, who are culturally superior to the rest of the Pilcomayo tribes, feed their dogs properly and have real use for them both in hunting and as watchdogs. But even these dogs are of uncertain breed and by nature so savage that for my own part I failed in my attempts to train them according to European methods.

These general remarks on the material culture of the Pilcomayo tribes may suffice as a basis for the following description of their social customs and their intellectual culture. I shall repeatedly have occasion to touch upon the ergology of the Indians in describing their magical ornaments and amulets, as well as various objects used at religious ceremonies.

/212 cont./

755 756 783 796 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164] [231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

Choroti SI6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 124 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

On seeing this couple, almost in a state of stark nakedness, seated on a bench among the cylinders and pistons of the engine, motionless for hours, we were necessarily reminded of the earthly paradise.

When among strangers the women are quiet and impassive, but when left to themselves they are full of fun and as playful as children. And this is generally the Indians' character.

The women take up a somewhat strange posture with their hands when they are standing. As they have no pockets to put them in, or fan with which to occupy them, or what have you, they place them upon their breasts which serve as supports for their arms which together rest upon them.

It would seem that such a habit would enlarge the breasts, but this is not so. The breasts are broad, it is true, but short and erect while the women are young. After expertoe virum, and having given suck to one or more children, the breasts shrivel and retract in a very unaesthetic manner, to tell the truth. It is to be noted that both men and women age early there, and also die early, and to this must be attributed the fact that there are few gray hairs even when there are faces and bodies so wrinkled as to make one believe that their owners must be as old as Methuselah.

I have gone into some detail in this matter of the breasts because it is known that in other regions, according to what is said, the women, when they give suck, give the nipple over the shoulder to the child which they are carrying on their backs. The fact is that no such thing occurs here.

The women, along with the men, have abundant, coarse, straight hair. They wear it rather long but not as long as they might, for it is shortened by wearing it in an unkempt fashion (which serves them as protection for eyes and forehead against the sun) and also by cutting.

They cut their hair, that on their faces as well as that on their scalps, with the jaw of a fish called palometa, which is armed with extraordinarily sharp teeth placed in two rows. The upper teeth dovetail exactly with the lower.

The palometa, the raya (ray--Translator) and the yacaré (alligator--Translator) are the scourge of those who bathe in this river and the lakes or pools which are fed by it. The palometa snaps, tears

/211/

755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air 756 rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medi- 783 cine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were 796 arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone [534] whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked [242] over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war ● [237] shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. [302] The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6 Mataco SI7

C 322 372

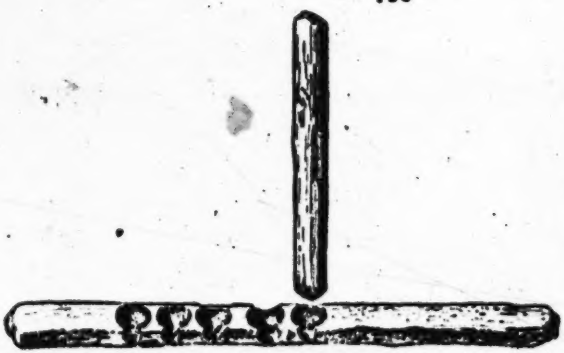

Fig. 148. Fire-drilling implement, consisting of two wooden sticks. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 2/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 193.

For scraping and polishing wooden objects, pieces of mussel-shell are used. Formerly, when the Choroti could not obtain iron, all woodwork was produced exclusively by means of fire and mussel-shells. In shaping a piece of wood, the parts that were to come away were burnt in the fire, and the charred parts then scraped off with a sharp-edged piece of mussel-shell.

Nordenskiöld mentions that the Choroti, in the same way as other Chaco tribes, use saws made of hard wood with which they, among other things, saw off the stem and leaves of the, to the Indians so important, caraguatá plant,[1] after having grubbed it up with a fork-like digging stick.

C 412 C 412 321 C 372 415 237 M 372 415 237

Fig. 149. Stems of a liana (Asclepiadaceæ), which forms the material of which fire-drilling implements of the Choroti generally are made. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/1. Riksm. 03. 3. 196.

Awls for working purposes are made of bone (fig. 147). Bone awls are also used for tattooing (see p. 75, 78), magical blood-letting (see pp. 63 and 64), and as weapons of offence (see p. 101).

Like other Chaco tribes, the Choroti produce fire by drilling. Their fire-kindling implement consists of two round-sectioned, dry sticks of wood (fig 148), usually obtained from a species of liana (of the Asclepiadaceæ), fig. 149. One stick (the female one), which is thicker, and usually longer, than the other one (the male stick), has one or more bowl-shaped indentations, at

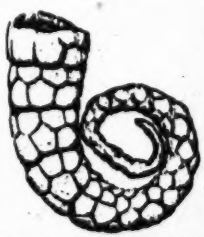

Fig. 150. Tail of armadillo, used as a tinder box. Mataco. Gran Chaco. Argentina. Exactly similar tinder boxes are used by the Choroti. 2/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 372.

[1] Nordenskiöld (11), pp. 63 and 66, also (18), pp. 110 and 111.

CM 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

CM 175 72 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

CM 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 262 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
● [241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting; 721 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of 262 [227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness 231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from ●241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they 579 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

Those pots which are used to contain water have an indented waistline around which a rope may be passed when they need to be transported. This rope, running around the jar, is slipped over the carrier's forehead and the vessel is carried on his back, to which effect he must bend back and neck forward. This manner of transportation is no where near as graceful as that of carrying jars on the head as our country women do, and rather makes the Indian women look like beasts of burden -- however, it may well be a more hygienic way and is, in any case, more practical when traveling along half choked forest paths.

They have no knowledge of, and do not practice, agriculture; yet they do sometimes plant corn (which, as is well known, originated in America) and also pumpkins. When they think it is time to go and eat the crop, they harvest it. They do not grind the corn, but boil it and the pumpkins also while they are yet green -- a harvest, then, is gathered in piece meal and lasts quite a long time. In order to sow they make use of a hard wood spade in the form of a small oar, or a large spear head; the husband makes a hole in the earth, his squaw throws in the seed, covers it, and that is all. The seed is sown in a recently burned off, damp field, that is, one which has just been rained on.

The crop is owned communally by all, but they are nigardly with it concerning outsiders. While we were on the ship, most of our food having run out, we hungered for fresh provisions and vegetables, for we had been without them for more than three months. When the Indians made us a present of pumpkins and ears of corn we were more than delighted. These Indians were friendly, but later on their friendliness proved false for they killed our interpreter. The sailors managed to discover the location of the pumpkin patch and corn field and raided them by stealth. On the following day, when they returned to the cultivated plots they found that everything had been destroyed and not a single growing plant was left. We were never able to find even one of the Indians.

It seems, also, that the whites do not want the Indians to take up agriculture. I was told that the white settlers once [215] came upon a number of fields sown by friendly frontier Indians, and destroyed them so completely that the discouraged Indians had never again planted so much as a handbreadth of land. This action

stemmed from the desire which the whites have of keeping the Indians from settling and taking possession (a fact recognized by Argentine law) of the excellent land which the local whites look upon as legitimate prey for the future.

They do not indulge in commercial enterprises; and how could they possibly do so when they have no agriculture or industries, being only wanderers and nomads? However, they do practice barter on a small scale, which is their only form of primitive, embryonic commerce. They do not have words for "buying and selling," and in order to express this idea it would seem that they had gone to some of school of economics to learn the exchange formula do ut des, for, strangely enough the Matacos, for example, instead of saying "sell me" say atquiocq niquiocq, which means "give me I give you."

One can gather from this that they have no form of money; but they have invented a word to signify our coins, which is tdócq-kynat among the Matacos and which means hide or skin of metal. Kynat is a generic word which covers all metals which do not exist or circulate in the Chaco. It would appear from this that it is a word invented prior to the appearance of paper money.

Nevertheless there is a sort of medium of exchange, though in only an incipient stage, among the inhabitants of the Chaco. It is a substance which the Indians use to paint themselves with and which is highly valued by them even in the smallest amounts. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra the plant which produces it is called urucú. This paint is obtained by boiling the fruit of the urucú for twenty-four hours, when the coloring matter floats to the top and is collected and made into small pellets of varying sizes. The dye is exuded from the skin of the fruit, which is about the size of an orange. The fruit with a blackist skin produces a black dye, the one with yellow skin gives an orange or red dye and the fruit having a white skin produces a green dye. The skin on the yellow and white varieties is about as thick as the outer covering on a walnut. Each one of the three grows on a different kind of urucú, all of which are plants which grow to be about as tall as a man, with fruit about the size of a pomegranate which split open of their own accord when they are ripe.

Although this substance is produced and made in Bolivia, it is current among all the Chaco Indians and is used by them to

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

which the strangers are believed to bring with them. The whole place, according to the idea of the Indians, has become infected as it were by the new-comers. Besides, the Indians understand that one party of white men is soon followed by another.

It is natural that the Chaco Indians should not care to bestow great labour on dwellings which in all probability will house them only for a short time, or in general, to arrange their life more comfortably in a place which they will probably soon be obliged to desert for ever. Apart from this, the Chaco Indian, who is perfectly suited to his environment, constructs his houses precisely in the way he thinks is most practical and of the material which is most easily obtainable. In the interior parts of the Chaco there are no large trees affording material for the construction of more substantial and durable houses. On the other hand, the scraggy trees and bushes in which the Chaco forests abound and the grassy plains provide building material in abundance, always within reach and excellent for the needs of the Indians. The beehive shaped huts of the primitive Chaco tribes therefore do not, as a certain ethnological school asserts, represent a type of human dwelling essentially characteristic of tribes at the lowest stages of cultural development, but must be wholly explained by the natural conditions. Like the Fuegians, who in their general culture are closely related to the Chaco tribes, the latter are not, on the whole, any lower in the scale of human development than most other tribes in tropical or sub-tropical South America, although nature may allow these to construct habitations of a higher type.

The same reasoning evidently accounts for the fact that the Pilcomayo tribes, although they are dependent on the river and to a great extent subsist by fishing, do not use canoes or craft of any kind. Whereas »dug-outs» of the kind customary among the South American Indians are commonly used by the Lenguas and other tribes of the river Paraguay, the Choroti, Mataco, Tobas, and Ashluslay have not even thought of constructing such vessels, obviously because the large timber trees from which canoes could be dug out are not obtainable in their country.

I have mentioned that agriculture is only practised by the Chaco tribes on a very limited scale, which of course is due to the dryness of the climate. Among all tribes the land is common property, and within this territory each family has a small plot of land allotted to it, or once taken possession of, which they are supposed to possess as long as they actually cultivate it. Pumpkin, *santia* (water melon), and beans are the principal crops of the Choroti; maize and manioc are also cultivated, but the drought

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Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

M 241 seldom allows them to reach maturity. Besides the drought, birds, ants, locusts, and rats often destroy the crops. The same fruits and cereals are cultivated by the Mataco and the Tobas in Bolivia, maize and manioc however with greater success than among the Choroti, since the climate there is more favourable. On the whole, the Chaco tribes are greatly dependent for their subsistence on the crops nature spontaneously gives them, and the great rôle that wild fruits like the algaroba, the chañar, the tusca, and a few others play in the economic life of these Indians has already been mentioned. It is mainly owing to these useful trees that the interior parts of the Chaco are habitable for people living in a state of nature.

T 241 184 439 The Bolivian Tobas, although they cultivate maize on a small scale, still get their main supply of this important cereal from the Avas in the north, with whom they carry on a sort of trade. Generally they get the maize in exchange for dried fish, which they store in considerable quantities during the summer season.

M T C 226 Fishing is the main occupation of the tribes living on the River Pilcomayo, and these Indians are therefore never seriously threatened by starvation. During the rainy season, when the river is swollen, fishing is often impossible; the proper season begins in April or May when the water is low and fish appear in abundance along the banks of the river. All Pilcomayo tribes use nets made of *caraguatá* fibres and of a peculiar triangular form, and since they have no canoes or vessels of any kind they always catch the fish by swimming and diving, in which they display remarkable skill. The Tobas, who are particularly skilled fishermen, use not only nets, but also, and I believe more commonly, bow and arrrows, a method only occasionally practised by the Choroti and the Mataco. When the Indians have caught a fish they instantly kill it with a small club of palo santo if it is a large one, if it is of a smaller kind simply by biting the head.

T 251 438 During a big fishing expedition the Indians, at any rate the Tobas, sometimes catch fish in enormous quantities. They preserve them by roasting, then store them in special shelters, formed of a roof made of reeds and palm-leaves resting on four poles. This dried fish forms an important article of exchange among the Tobas.

M T C 224 Next to fishing, hunting is the most important means of subsistence of the Chaco Indians, but in this respect also the Choroti and Mataco are inferior to the Tobas. Especially the Choroti seemed to me to be poor hunters. In the parts of the Chaco inhabited by these Indians game is scarce, and with their comparatively small bows and arrows they only

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

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18. The Star-woman (second version) (Martin)

There was a man who was very ugly. Nobody liked him. One night he stood where the others were playing. Looking upward he saw in the sky a pretty red star. He said, »I would like to marry her.» As soon as he had made this wish the star stood near him. The woman said, »I came because you called me.» He told her that he loved her. They were married. But after a few days they quarreled. The woman went back to the sky and the man followed her.

The Morning Star is an old man who has a big fire. His fire is cold. The star-woman was the daughter of the Morning Star. In the sky it is very cold. The father of the star-woman burned his son-in-law and ate him. His soul entered an owl called *tyustáx* which says »wek, wek, wek.»

C. THE TRICKSTER

19. Origin of the Corn

Tawkxwax sowed only one gourd in his field. The armadillo went to him and asked for a seed, but *Tawkxwax* refused to give it. The armadillo then cut off the end of his own tail, which was covered with granulous scales, and stuck it in the soil. Beautiful corn stalks soon sprouted from the ground. At that time the armadillo was the only one who had corn. *Tawkxwax* had gourds, melons, sorghum, sugar-cane, peanuts, oranges, bananas, but no corn. He called on the armadillo and begged for some grains of corn, but the armadillo refused because *Tawkxwax* had been stingy when he had wanted some gourd seeds. Besides he never gave anybody his new plants. *Tawkxwax* went for a walk to a forest. He got tired and sat down beside a *yuchan*[1] tree. He started to carve this tree into the shape of a horse. He changed the wood into a living animal. In the same way he made a saddle, reins and bridle. Then he set out on

[1] Bombaceae, silk cotton tree. The trunk has the form of a bottle; hence the popular name of the tree, *palo borracho* (drunk wood).

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

horseback. The people did not know what a horse was as they had never seen one. *Tawkxwax* was hungry so he went to the armadillo's house. There he succeeded in trading his horse for corn. With the corn in his possession, he called all the men together and distributed corn among them. He taught them how to cultivate it. The people at first were afraid. Many thought the plant was poisonous. Others said it was very good food. Finally all were convinced and from that day on people have always had something to eat. Mankind is indebted to *Tawkxwax* for food.

A man who heard of *Tawkxwax's* horse went to the forest in order to carve one for himself. He carved the *yuchan* so awkwardly that he made a tapir. Thus also did men make mules and donkeys.

20. Origin of Certain Wild Plants

Tawkxwax climbed a *yuchan* and fell down head first. As he fell the thorns of the tree tore his body. He removed his stomach from his body and buried it. From it grew a plant (*iletsáx*) the root of which is very large and full of water. His intestines became lianas. Like a cow *Tawkxwax* had two stomachs. With the second he made a plant called *iwokanó*.

21. The Origin of Serpents (Pedro)

In ancient times there were no serpents. One day *Tawkxwax* found a thick rope. He picked it up but threw it away later on. After a while, thinking it might be useful, he went back to get it. He looked and looked but he could not find the rope. At last he found a serpent and thought that perhaps it might be the rope he wanted. A serpent is therefore called *niyǫ́k* or rope. *Tawkxwax* wanted see whether this new animal he found could bite so he began to tease it. The serpent did not bite him. He held fire to the mouth of the serpent until it bit him severely. The first serpent he made poisonous was the *yarara* (*hatenekwǫ́mę*). When the other

4: Nino--431 M-3 (1893-1911) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano SI...

Mataco SI 7
Toba SI 12

/319/

Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 177 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171] M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

in making aloja. The chañar ripens before the other two mentioned above and is a sweetish, round, rather small yellow fruit with a stone, which is eaten either raw or cooked. From this fruit arrope is made, which is good tasting and has, in local opinion, medicinal qualities for the treatment of coughs and asthma. The chañar tree, while it is young, has leaves and trunk similar to the tamarind; the branches look like those of the eucalyptus. 824

Shortly after the algarrobo pods comes the mistol which is similar to our azufaifo except for this difference: from a mixture of its fruits with algarrobo pod flower, patay is made, and kept in skins and well kneaded. Together with these fruits, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later, all the other fruits ripen -- in the Chaco in the hottest months which are October and December (spring and summer months) and further south, towards Tucumán, in November and February.

Through certain techniques of preservation the Indians are able to prolong the yearly period during which they can feed on this vegetable diet, particularly if the crop has been a good one. The harvest lasts between four and five months and is a time of carnival for the Indians [189]. 251

To preserve the algarrobo pods they build small huts which they place on four posts in order to supply them with proper ventilation and to keep them free of ants and other insects. It is a pleasure to see these little constructions rising above the Indians' huts in the same manner as do our towers. Each camp takes pleasure in having more of these little granaries than do its neighbors. In the same manner do they keep vinal and some roots and fruits which can and should be cooked when dry. 343

When the aloja is ready, which is usually at eleven in the morning, all the men gather about the yuchan container, seated in the Moorish fashion. Then, with two or three long-handled dry gourds they dip out the liquid and pass it around to each other. Meanwhile they talk about their affairs: about wars, the crops, news, odd bits of scandal, and guffaw at any strange happening or quid pro quo. Thus they continue for three, four or more hours. When the liquor is finished they fall upon the solid matter remaining. The women and children take no part in any of this. 273 [521]

They set a high value on the algarrobo pod. A famous chief, whom the whites called Granadero (Grenadier guard -- Translator) 824

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

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estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

762 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

[197] [115]

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

[824] 262 • 251 252

The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

762 164

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
323 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
●[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and "hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usually at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the

drink is made; and the so-called [187] "patay" algarrobo whose pods, 137
like our white beans, are thick and produce a large amount of ex- 824
cellent flour with which bread -- called patay in the Quechua language --
is made. The first two have simple compound leaves, that is, each
leaf is made up of pairs of leaflets placed evenly along its axis, with
small thorns at the base of each leaf. The third type of algarrobo has
complex-compound leaves in which the secondary leaflets are sub-
divided into many pairs of almost microspoic ones, as occurs in the
churqui (Acacia cavenia), and also has thorns between ten and fifteen
centimeters long, though not large in girth.

In order to make patay (bread) which is only made in Santiago 252
and Catamarca in the basin of the Pueblos de Belen, the dry algarrobo
pod, ready for grinding, is placed under a hardwood or stone pestle
which is moved by a long lever. The pod, thus ground, is turned
into flour, but the seeds, which are extraordinarily hard, do not even
break. The flour is then sifted, poured and pressed into a pot which
has been previously heated by being put out in the sun or near a fire.
The pot is now sealed off with fine sand and then again placed in the
sun or near a fire for a short while. In ten minutes the patay is ready,
for the warming has no other object than to melt the honey contained
in the flour in order to make it coalesce into a lump, this lump be-
coming very hard once the honey cools. Thus they make loaves
weighing from four to six pounds and more, which can be packed
into saddlebags, slung over the saddle and afford a delicious if some-
what cloying food. The flour is in some ways similar to chestnut
flour. A slice of this, impaled on a knife and heated in the fire is
a really superb tidbit, both in smell and in taste. Aloja is the 273
Argentine (1) name given to the fermented beverages of that region,

1. Cacan (?) Ed.

while in Quechua they are called chicha (2), in Mataco; hŭ-nă;

2. Chicha is made from corn. Ed. --
See: Acca and Asua. [?--Translabor]

in Mocovi: nă-nă and nănn-nă; and in Vilela: tsŭc-cuĕ.

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767 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the [197] English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins [115] Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the [824] fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of 762 suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in 251 the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and 252 before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, 762 foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes 764 jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

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"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 [276] bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
● [261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

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579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

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533 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its
222 upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

732

which even in the most favorable physical circumstances can occur quite often among children who are the offspring of parents who are too closely consanguineous. Marriages of this type (between close relatives) are not rare here, and -- this is not just an extra trip bearing grist for my mill -- I have been assured that of the very small number of defective persons these latter, the deaf-mute, are the least rare among the Indians of these parts; among whom, let it be said, I have not seen a single cretin or cotudo [coto is a malignant swelling of the throat -- Translator] and that in spite of the fact that aberrants of this type abound in the north and western part of the Republic.

To come back to my deaf-mute: The occasion of my meeting him was brought about by his having been attacked by a tiger [jaguar--Translator] which mauled him horribly while he was gathering firewood. (This is one further proof as to the difficulty of putting up a successful struggle for life in these waste places if one is not in the full possession of all one's senses). We were called to treat the poor wretch, but he refused our ministrations energetically, preferring to put himself in the hands of the witch doctors.

Despite what I have stated above, the Indians themselves [847] have assured me that it sometimes [222] happens that a mother will allow her children to die if their father or any other man who will care for them dies or goes away.

However, this must happen only very seldom (and does 261 not weaken our argument regarding the handicapped) for among the inhabitants of a given village and particularly between relatives there exists a truly charming sharing of goods -- yet when food is scarce one may suppose that the phenomenon is more common. But such a state of food scarcity is probably felt less owing to the great variety of foods acceptable to the Indians and their really remarkable adaptability to the availability of food: they can live on a very skimpy diet when need arises, and then gorge themselves with a vengeance when they hit a time of plenty.

The elasticity of the stomachs of these savages is truly 261 extraordinary. When not on the march a mouthful of food is 147 enough for them; while fresh air, the exertions of the hunt, of fishing, of harvesting and of traveling in pursuit of these activities

261 ●
or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter VIII.

Education of children. Puberty ceremonies.

855 In the last chapter I have pointed out that infanticide, as practised by the Chaco Indians in certain cases, cannot be explained as a token of a lack of parental feeling in general. The Indian parents love their children, feed them well and try to protect them not only against natural dangers but also against evil spirits by means of body-painting and amulets. To what extent they take care of the well-being of their offspring is best shown by the custom of couvade. Even at those times of the year when the food is scarce I do not believe that the Indians allow their children to suffer from hunger. At the algaroba 855 season again, when there is an abundance of food, the children go on 261 eating from morning till night, and since the food to a great extent consists of fruits more or less indigestible, it is at that time a common thing to see young children of both sexes whose stomachs are abnormally distended so as to make them really paunchy. Gluttony is a characteristic feature of the Chaco Indians during the »season», but especially of the children.

855 The Chaco Indians bring up their children in complete liberty. Pa- rents are never seen punishing their children for disobedience or faults 861 committed. This is partly due to the fact that the sense of what is proper and permissible is not developed among the Indians in the same way as in civilized societies. The Indian hates restraint and fetters of any kind, he wants to be free and independent himself and grants his children the same liberty. The latter, on the other hand, from an Indian point of view very seldom appear punishable, since they easily accommodate themselves to the customs and moral views of the tribe. An Indian boy may rob or do some other harm to a stranger, be he an Indian of a foreign tribe or a white man, but he will, from a natural instinct, respect the property of a

∞∞ The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 175 291 "The men usually go about stark naked without a stitch on, although their skins are so tanned by the rough weather that they seem to be covered by animal hide or leather, particularly the old men, who are numerous, because the inclemencies of weather do not harm them, they having been used to such rigors since childhood. I saw in Santa Fé the head of a Mocobí Indian, who must have been about 40 years old, the skin of which was more than half a finger thick. The women go about entirely covered, from head to toe, in animal skins, and the principal women attire themselves in cloth made from a pliant plant larger than the agave, which in this province is called "chaguar" and grows wild. From it they make a thread similar to that used by cobblers, and then weave their clothes to which the daughters and wives of the more important men add some black and white ornamentation. From this same fibre they also make jars which, C M [415] cemented over with wax, can hold water pretty well and also the beverages with which they get drunk.

C M 302 175 [304] "All the women paint their faces, breasts and arms in the same manner as the moorish women of Africa and Spain, and those of most consequence do this in intricate patterns which remain in the skin permanently, for their mothers from the day they are born start to fix the dyes in their very flesh with the help of the large sharp bones of certain fish. They also use a dark blue dye, although not to such an extent, on their male children. In addition to this the mothers pluck the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, leaving a completely bald swath three fingers wide running from the forehead to the crown of the head on which the hair never grows again. Thus do the Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies and Aquilotes go about, both men and women, and the latter are extremely ugly as a consequence although, to their thinking, they are very beautiful. And in order that the women pull their hair out, the Devil is wont to appear to them in the form of an Indian woman who comes out of the nearest forest covered with a net and tells them that those who will not allow themselves to be plucked are not to eat fish, for should they do so, they will die. [577] So that if some C M [262] woman, fearing the pain, resists having her hair pulled, she later allows it so as to be able to eat fish which is their favorite food. Others of these Indian nations do not make these pathlike inroads in

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533 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its
222 upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her
262 hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting; 221 262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of [227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness 231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from 241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they 579 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

C
721 belongings, they try to despoil it by surprise. These actions are always followed by deaths, wounds and imprisonment, which are cause enough for new wars, made without warning, to which end each has informers and spies in the other camp.

Fortune has for a long time favored the Tobas who occupy the best lands, that is, those bordering on the Paraná and Paraguay rivers for about sixty leagues inland and for hundreds of leagues along the rivers' courses; furthermore because of clandestine commerce with Corrientes and the Republic of Paraguay these Indians have been able to secure some firearms, and as they are the furthest away from the white man's ever closing ring, they naturally receive an appreciable contingent of rascals who are attempting to escape from them.

This is why the Vilelas and Chulupíes have become mixed in with the Tobas, which the Mocovíes, who used to live in the Southwest, in direct contact with the Santa Fe and Santiago frontiers, are also doing and who furthermore have so much in common with them as regards language -- for I have found among them many identical words. This very thing is what is happening to the Matacos.

Chapter II

Physical Characteristics of the Matacos

M
142 The physical differences between the Tobas and the Matacos are noteworthy. Generally speaking, the Mataco is half a hand's breadth shorter than the Toba, though this does not mean that he is a small man when compared to us. He has an extraordinarily deep chest, a bull-like neck and well developed muscles; he is thick set, his head large, his face broad and with very salient cheekbones.

They have long lower jaws, very much inclined downwards; their foreheads are hardly ever broad but often seem even smaller than they are in reality because of their unkempt hair. Their feet are medium sized, their hands small, well formed and admirably joined to the
M arm, especially in the women; the hair on their faces is scanty. Of
142 their thirty-two teeth, the canines have seemed to me, in general
● 262 very little pronounced, which may have its explanation in the fact

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some
[262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat
[263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of
[262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and
[756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black,
[165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of
302 [165] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, 352
such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and 196
"hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to 411
one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed 361
symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the 252
very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild 262
fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are 323
made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usu- 264
ally at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out [252]
and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the 262

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

Even had this difficulty not existed, the social organization 231
of the American nomads made the keeping of domesticated animals well nigh impossible. In [220] effect, and in spite of the fact that one nation might occupy an immense area, yet it would be divided into small tribes who owned sway over relatively small territories and were (as their survivors still are) continually at war amongst themselves. It follows from this that there was no security, which is an indispensable condition for the raising of animals and for any other peaceful occupation. Even at the present time the Chaco Indians, although they are acquainted with our domestic animals and do on occasion try to raise them, do not do so on a worthwhile scale because the mere fact of their possessing them is a temptation for their neighbors to invade and despoil them. If social life had somehow got to the point of compelling these Indians to gather into large groupings, then, given the range of their vast territories and despite their being nomadic and continually at war, it would always have been easy for them to protect their animals, when invaded, by fencing them into inclosures.

Can the Indians of these parts have been cannibals? This is 266
a question which always arises when we have dealings with savages like these.

In America cannibalism has had adherents among "Hebrews and Samaritans," among "Barbarians and Christians." The savage Caribs and the cultured Mexicans topped off the very best dishes of their cuisine with human flesh. The peaceful Peruvians used not to disdain stews of human blood for their religious feast days, in which they would knead corn bread with the blood taken from the foreheads of babes -- what pious butchers were the gentle and beautiful women devotees of that nation's religion.

In this region of the Chaco, although cannibalism may have been practiced, temporibus illis, (which cannot be proved), at the present time it is either non-existent or else must be considered reduced to its very lowest terms. 727

I shall say nothing about the custom of drinking aloja from 264
the scalp of a prisoner which has been converted into a propitiating cup of vengeance and victory.

I have seen them drink avidly of the blood of cattle 262 272
slaughtered for our use, but they do not feed exclusively on cattle

blood or on that of other animals as some have reported; rather 262
do they make their principal diet of fish, game, and the roots 272
and fruits of the field with which, together with wild forest honey
which is so abundant, they prepare the fermented beverages I
have already spoken about.

He who spends any time among the Indians finds cause to 732
marvel at the lack of cripples or maimed people. From this fact
certain travelers have gone on to affirm that the Indians, like
latter day Spartans, kill off their malformed babies. This is also
the opinion of some historians.

[221] I, on the other hand, although confirming the fact
of their being no cripples by my own personal observation, ex-
plain the phenomenon by attributing it to the physical and social
condition in which the Indians live. A more than free life, gen-
erally sufficient food (in spite of what may be said to the con-
trary); the nakedness of the women -- that is, their lack of tight
garments about their waists and breasts; the healthful climate
(for them at least), all are physical elements conducive to the
great rarity of cases of deformity in the body structure of their
babies.

Furthermore, the constant state of war, the frequent sur-
prise attacks, the custom of giving no quarter, the wild beasts
and reptiles, all conspire against the handicapped who are
inferior in the indispensable faculties necessary in the struggle
for existence. In addition to this it is probable that malformed
children are not accorded the privilege granted their normal
peers, that is, that their lives be spared by victorious enemies,
and they be carried off to the latters' villages there to be raised
as members of the kidnapers' group and thus contribute to its
strength and progress.

All this then explains sufficiently the lack of deformed
individuals without the need to attribute to the Indians the habit
of killing newborn babies or allowing them to die. My personal
experience allows me to set down a positive happening which
gives the lie to such a supposition.

In the very center of the Chaco I came upon a deaf-mute
Indian who must have been a little over thirty years of age.
Really, if there is any defect which makes a man completely
useless and deserving of being eliminated from society, this is
it. However, it is true also that it is one of those imperfections

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132 the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable,
137 we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these
134 kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

262 From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same
273 time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourliea decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sisyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

314 A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

132 It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called »summer« in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

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Chapter XIII.

Belief in „good spirits".

776 I have so far mainly spoken of such spirits of the Chaco Indians as are regarded as essentially evilly disposed to mankind, being looked upon as the authors of sickness and misfortune. But the religion of these Indians is by no means only a pure demonology. They also assume the existence of »good spirits» and these from a certain point of view are of the greatest interest. The Chaco Indians especially speak of their good spirits with reference to the guardian spirits of the medicine-men and the spirits animating certain plants. With the former I shall deal presently. For the moment a few words may be said of the spirits which are 776 believed to animate the *plants*. Of course, there are also evil or harmful 824 plant spirits. The character of the spirit animating a tree or plant is naturally first of all determined according to the useful or harmful properties of that tree or plant. Thus plants producing poisonous fruits harmful to man, are animated by evil spirits, since the effects are always ascribed to the indwelling spirit, the »soul» of the plant. Likewise, in [754] the cactus thorns, of which malignant sorcerers avail themselves in throwing spells, are animated by evil *nōhsek*, *aittáh*, *peyák*, according to the names different tribes give these demons. Still the Chaco Indians pay special attention to the spirits of such trees or plants as produce edible or otherwise useful fruit, which in a country like Chaco are of essential importance to the inhabitants.

776 Among trees which from an alimental point of view are of great import-824 ance to the Chaco Indians I have mentioned the algaroba, the chañar, 262 and the tusca, the fruits of which ripen in the months October to February. It is particularly these trees which are said to be animated by »good spirits» who control their growth and cause their fruits to ripen.

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The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noin* or *nōtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aitták slahsa is*, the Choroti *mōhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aitták* or *mōhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nōtta* (= *noin'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noin*.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Ceremonial fasting.

M 785 262 Fasting or restrictions in diet play an important part among the religious practices of the Chaco Indians. In most cases ceremonial fasting seems to be due to the belief that in eating man may come in contact with dangerous disease-bringing spirits which are in some way associated with the food. Since harmful spirits are supposed to have a special liking for certain kinds of food, these kinds of food are in some cases taboo to the Indians. The common belief that the spirits of the dead reincarnate themselves in various animals has in the first place given rise to all sorts of food restrictions, for the meat of such animals is generally, although not invariably, regarded as taboo.

M 262 The Indians of the Gran Chaco, dependent upon very restricted sources of subsistence, as a rule utilize everything that can possibly be used as food. Thus several animals are eaten which we do not regard as fit for food, and if a certain animal is despised, this is, as a rule due to superstitious ideas of one kind or another. The *Choroti* for instance C 262 among other things regard such animals as locusts, certain beetles, lizards, and a kind of rat as delicacies; of others the fox is considered edible, as also of birds the owl and a certain kind of vulture (called *carancho* in Spanish. *Polyborus vulgaris*). In regard to the fox, the owl, [888] and the vulture, however, there is the restriction that only *old* people can eat them, not young people and children, whom such food would do harm. In several cases I received from the younger Choroti men the explanation: »The old ones can eat the meat of this or that animal, not we». This means that such animals or birds as those just mentioned are in some way associated with evil spirits: the eating of the meat of these animals therefore would have disastrous consequences for young people and children who have less power of resistance against evil

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this may be, it is now impossible to get a positive explanation from the Indians themselves as to their real motives for observing this ancient custom.

The dietary rules observed by the *Tobas* are in many respects more detailed than those of other Chaco tribes. I have mentioned for instance that when a girl reaches the age of puberty she is bound to fast strictly, being particularly forbidden to eat fish and meat. On the other hand, she is enjoined to eat the leaves of the tusca tree and the leaves and fruit of the vine which the Tobas call *charáde*. These leaves and fruit probably possess some magical properties which are believed to have beneficial effects upon the girl. Dobrizhoffer, speaking of the puberty customs of the ancient Abipones, mentions that the girl had to abstain from fish and meat and was only allowed to feed on »a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood«. By this fruit he evidently meant the *tasi*-fruit (*charáde*) which is eaten on the same occasion by the Toba girls of the present day.

Among the Tobas and the Mataco, and probably also among the Choroti, a woman is always bound to diet during her menstrual periods, since she is at these periods more or less exposed to supernatural dangers. The Toba woman carefully abstains from eating fish, and her only food is a dish prepared of boiled maize and called *euóhi* in the Toba language. An infringement of these rules would be likely to bring about the terrible consequences which have been mentioned above. Similarly, when a child has been born in a family, both the father and the mother of the child must live on a restricted diet.

Again, after a Toba man has died, his widow, daughter, and other female relatives carefully avoid eating fish. If they infringe this rule, they will, according to the belief of the Tobas, sicken and die or go mad. Instead of fish, maize is eaten. Even some of the men observe the same custom, abstaining from fish for some time after the death of a relative.

All these food restrictions are, no doubt, based upon the same idea, namely, that evil spirits may hide in the forbidden food and gain entrance into the body if it is eaten. At any rate spirits are in some way associated with the food. With regard to the fish this is expressly stated. It is a curious fact that fish, which is the principal food of the Tobas, is so religiously shunned on certain occasions. Behind this superstition there are undoubtedly real experiences as to the harmful effects that the eating of fish may bring. Thus the Tobas assert that incautious

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eating of fish at the beginning of the wet season is likely to cause malarial fever. What is particularly dangerous in the fish, as the Indians told me, is the stomach; an evil spirit may hide in it. Therefore a person must abstain from eating this kind of food when he or she is in a delicate condition and exposed to the attacks of supernatural enemies. After a death it is the death-demon that is believed to have possibly taken up its abode in the stomach of the fish. In general, the rules of diet, both in regard to fish and in regard to other kinds of food, are always more strict for the women than for the men, and this is naturally due to the belief that the former have by nature less power of resistance against evil spirits than the latter.

Several other food restrictions exist among the Chaco tribes, and most of them are due to superstitious ideas of one kind or another. Just as the Choroti shun the meat of the deer, so I found among the Toba men an aversion to the meat of the wild pig, although this is a very tasty food. This may possibly be due to the idea that the wild pig is a »female» animal, as is also the armadillo. At any rate the Tobas have the belief that the souls of women particularly reincarnate themselves in the wild pig. All Chaco Indians likewise have an aversion to drinking the blood or milk of animals and eating the eggs of hens and of other birds. The Indians could give me no explanation as to this superstition, and it is possible that the original reasons for it are now forgotten. It is, however, highly probable that they shun blood and milk because they believe that the spirit or soul of the animal is in them. This is at any rate quite obvious with regard to blood, which plays an important part in native superstition. Thus among all tribes there appears a mysterious dread of shedding the blood of domestic animals. The Choroti for instance, when they have to slaughter a sheep or goat, never kill the animal by cutting its throat or shedding its blood in some other way, but always, according to old observance, by strangulation. The custom is professedly observed for fear of coming in contact with the blood of the animal. — For a similar reason, I believe, the Indians have originally abstained from eating eggs. The egg is the embryo of the bird, and in the embryo or foetus of an animal, according to primitive belief, its spirit has its abode in the same way as in its blood or milk. It is interesting in this connection to note what Mr. Grubb says of the analogous ideas of the Lenguas. »Milk, whether of the cow, goat, sheep, or mare, is never drunk. The older people seem to consider it unfit for them, and children are forbidden it because it is supposed that the milk upon which they

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171 are nourished will influence them physically as well as in character, and the Indians have no desire that their children should in any way acquire the natures of such animals.[1])

262 826 774 The fear of eating the *heads* of certain animals is probably due to similar ideas. A menstruous woman, as we have seen, is forbidden to eat the head of a parrot, lest she should go mad or be changed into a tiger; and similarly a father, while he is observing the rules of the couvade, must abstain from eating the head of a cow. According to primitive belief the soul or vital power of the body is particularly concentrated in the hair and the head. That the head of a cow is especially regarded as taboo is comprehensible from the fact that animals imported by the whites are generally looked upon with superstitious fear and their flesh avoided by Indians still living in a state of nature.

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[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* p. 137.

a) *Conception*

831 Sperm is located in the knee. In order to cause an abundant secretion of sperm, it is advisable to drink broth and
262 milk and to eat chickens. It is important not to drink the broth of a bird called *čana* for the child would then be lazy. In order to have healthy children it is highly recommended that the broth of an aquatic bird called *aṣkan* be drunk;
842 The child is formed by the sperm which is assimilated into milk. The »milk» coagulates and fills up the matrix, thus do children form themselves gradually. The presence of the child in a mother's womb prevents the blood from
[843] flowing and menstruation stops. Pregnancy lasts eight months.

842 It is impossible for a man not to procreate children. Only
789 women can be sterile. Sterility may occur because the woman has been stopped up by a medicine-man, thus man's »milk» can no longer penetrate into her bosom. This may be accounted for in two ways. A woman may ask a medicine-man to make her sterile, or a bad medicine-man may make a woman sterile in order to harm her family. Sterility may be cured by a medicine-man, but the task is not easy and there are few who will attempt it.

b) *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

843 A pregnant woman works but little, she most eat sufficient, but not too much, food. The child, still in the mother's womb, sucks the food absorbed by its father and mother and if they were to eat too much the child would get fat and would be unable to come out. The husband of an expectant mother must give up certain kinds or work. He cannot use a knife or an axe for the strokes of any cutting instrument might kill or wound the child. He must not wear boots lest the child's legs be crooked. If he keeps his hat on his head the skull of the child will be flat. He must not write with ink lest the child's face be covered with marks.

845 A child born dead is buried immediately without any cere-
766 mony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue
●262 to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana. All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years.
834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical
856 power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

852 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert. When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces
[862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child. The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

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estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

762 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the [197] English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins [115] Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the [824] fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of ●262 suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in 251 the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and 252 before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

762 The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, 764 foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

142 [262] that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat [263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of [262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and [756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black, [165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of 302 [765] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and "hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usually at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

It is worth noting that although they are such tipplers, they do 264 ●
not drink anything with their meals, not even water. On board ship the Indian guests we entertained refused all beverages while they were eating. After they had finished eating they preferred to drink water by crouching beside the river and drinking out of one hand.

The Indians are great beggars and yet miserly with their own [209]
possessions where whites are concerned. This is understandable since they are poor.

It occurs to me that I should mention something which, though 142
out of place here, I must set down for fear of forgetting it later: 145

The Indian boys, until they are eight or ten have disproportionately large bellies, so much so that they customarily bind them at the level of the navel. Later on they lose their bloated tummies and grow into well proportioned men.

It seems pertinent to me to say that the algarrobo belongs to 137
our family of the garrobas (Ceratonia silicua) and the botanists know it under the name of Prosopis algarrobo. Its importance is immense in the domestic economy of the savages and country people. It deserves close attention for this reason. The crown grows to some ten meters in diameter but is not very dense, either because of the small number of leaves or because of their shape, yet it affords quite a fair amount of shade. The bark is very rough and is similar to that of the grape vine.

The vinal (Prosopis ruscifolia) is a very small tree, yet boasts a sizeable crown. It is remarkable for its thorns which are from ten to fifteen centimeters long and sometimes a centimeter thick, and very dangerous if one gets a jab from them. The leaves, which are about the same size as acacia leaves but more pointed and somewhat rough, are said to be an effective remedy for eye ailments.

The scientific name for the chañar is Gurliöea decorticans; and of the mistol, Ziziphus mistol.

The fruit of all these trees are avidly devoured by all manner of beasts, and the algarrobo and vinal pods are the best possible fattening fodder for horses and cattle [191].

A type of fruit which is also to be found in a wild state, but in very limited quantity in my experience , is the plum. This fruit has a pleasant taste and is all the more appreciated for its scarcity.

Even had this difficulty not existed, the social organization 231
of the American nomads made the keeping of domesticated ani-
mals well nigh impossible. In [220] effect, and in spite of the
fact that one nation might occupy an immense area, yet it would
be divided into small tribes who owned sway over relatively small
territories and were (as their survivors still are) continually at war
amongst themselves. It follows from this that there was no
security, which is an indispensable condition for the raising of
animals and for any other peaceful occupation. Even at the
present time the Chaco Indians, although they are acquainted
with our domestic animals and do on occasion try to raise them,
do not do so on a worthwhile scale because the mere fact of their
possessing them is a temptation for their neighbors to invade and
despoil them. If social life had somehow got to the point of com-
pelling these Indians to gather into large groupings, then, given
the range of their vast territories and despite their being nomadic
and continually at war, it would always have been easy for them
to protect their animals, when invaded, by fencing them into
inclosures.

Can the Indians of these parts have been cannibals? This is 266
a question which always arises when we have dealings with savages
like these.

In America cannibalism has had adherents among "Hebrews
and Samaritans," among "Barbarians and Christians." The savage
Caribs and the cultured Mexicans topped off the very best dishes
of their cuisine with human flesh. The peaceful Peruvians used
not to disdain stews of human blood for their religious feast days,
in which they would knead corn bread with the blood taken from
the foreheads of babes -- what pious butchers were the gentle
and beautiful women devotees of that nation's religion.

In this region of the Chaco, although cannibalism may have
been practiced, temporibus illis, (which cannot be proved), at
the present time it is either non-existent or else must be con-
sidered reduced to its very lowest terms.

727

I shall say nothing about the custom of drinking aloja from 264
the scalp of a prisoner which has been converted into a propitiating
cup of vengeance and victory.

I have seen them drink avidly of the blood of cattle 262
slaughtered for our use, but they do not feed exclusively on cattle 272

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Choroti SK6

C 262

spirits, but not for old men who are initiated in the magic art and know how to render them harmless. — It is curious that on the other hand an animal like the *deer* is regarded by the Choroti as absolutely unfit for food. Not even old men would touch the flesh of deer, believing that if they did, they would die. This is due to the belief, mentioned before, that the deer is an evil spirit (*möhsek*), the reincarnation of the spirit of a sorcerer, a superstition which is widespread among the South American Indians and everywhere manifests itself in an aversion to eating the meat of this innocent animal.

M 785

Ceremonial fasting, as we have seen, is prescribed among the Choroti and the Mataco on certain occasions which are regarded as important and critical in some respect. Thus the father has to restrict his diet when he is lying in couvade, and girls have to diet during their first menstruation. We have also seen that behind these practices there is the fear of evil spirits in one form or another.

If disease and death bringing demons are believed to enter easily into the body with the food eaten, we can understand why eating is so often to the Indians a ceremonial business. This is also intelligible from the point of view that by eating an animal and coming in contact with its soul, a man may acquire the spiritual qualities of that animal. This idea explains the curious custom practised among the Tobas, that when a chief's daughter attains puberty, the men alone have to eat the meat of the ostrich, whereas the women eat the meat of the armadillo. As a general rule, both among the Tobas and among other Chaco Indians, men and women do not eat together but separately, the men first and the women afterwards. This custom is observed so strictly, that one may assume a particular superstition behind it. Moreover, when the Indians eat, they do not speak much with one another and do not like to be spoken to. Since they believe that man may evade evil spirits by keeping silence and avoiding attracting their attention, it is possible that the ceremonial character of their banquets is partly connected with this idea. And as women are especially believed to attract the spirits, this may be, or may originally have been, one reason why the men avoid eating with them. But it should also be remembered that in primitive societes eating together is believed to establish a mysterious union or connection between all those taking part in the common banquet. Since a strict distinction is made between a man's and a woman's spiritual qualities, it is not difficult to understand that the men avoid the company of the women on those occasions when they eat. However

M 264

M [562]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba S/12

this may be, it is now impossible to get a positive explanation from the Indians themselves as to their real motives for observing this ancient custom.

The dietary rules observed by the *Tobas* are in many respects more detailed than those of other Chaco tribes. I have mentioned for instance that when a girl reaches the age of puberty she is bound to fast strictly, being particularly forbidden to eat fish and meat. On the other hand, she is enjoined to eat the leaves of the tusca tree and the leaves and fruit of the vine which the Tobas call *charáde*. These leaves and fruit probably possess some magical properties which are believed to have beneficial effects upon the girl. Dobrizhoffer, speaking of the puberty customs of the ancient Abipones, mentions that the girl had to abstain from fish and meat and was only allowed to feed on »a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood«. By this fruit he evidently meant the *tasi*-fruit (*charáde*) which is eaten on the same occasion by the Toba girls of the present day.

Among the Tobas and the Mataco, and probably also among the Choroti, a woman is always bound to diet during her menstrual periods, since she is at these periods more or less exposed to supernatural dangers. The Toba woman carefully abstains from eating fish, and her only food is a dish prepared of boiled maize and called *euóhi* in the Toba language. An infringement of these rules would be likely to bring about the terrible consequences which have been mentioned above. Similarly, when a child has been born in a family, both the father and the mother of the child must live on a restricted diet.

Again, after a Toba man has died, his widow, daughter, and other female relatives carefully avoid eating fish. If they infringe this rule, they will, according to the belief of the Tobas, sicken and die or go mad. Instead of fish, maize is eaten. Even some of the men observe the same custom, abstaining from fish for some time after the death of a relative.

All these food restrictions are, no doubt, based upon the same idea, namely, that evil spirits may hide in the forbidden food and gain entrance into the body if it is eaten. At any rate spirits are in some way associated with the food. With regard to the fish this is expressly stated. It is a curious fact that fish, which is the principal food of the Tobas, is so religiously shunned on certain occasions. Behind this superstition there are undoubtedly real experiences as to the harmful effects that the eating of fish may bring. Thus the Tobas assert that incautious

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 72 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

Even had this difficulty not existed, the social organization 231
of the American nomads made the keeping of domesticated animals well nigh impossible. In [220] effect, and in spite of the fact that one nation might occupy an immense area, yet it would be divided into small tribes who owned sway over relatively small territories and were (as their survivors still are) continually at war amongst themselves. It follows from this that there was no security, which is an indispensable condition for the raising of animals and for any other peaceful occupation. Even at the present time the Chaco Indians, although they are acquainted with our domestic animals and do on occasion try to raise them, do not do so on a worthwhile scale because the mere fact of their possessing them is a temptation for their neighbors to invade and despoil them. If social life had somehow got to the point of compelling these Indians to gather into large groupings, then, given the range of their vast territories and despite their being nomadic and continually at war, it would always have been easy for them to protect their animals, when invaded, by fencing them into inclosures.

Can the Indians of these parts have been cannibals? This is 266
a question which always arises when we have dealings with savages like these.

In America cannibalism has had adherents among "Hebrews and Samaritans," among "Barbarians and Christians." The savage Caribs and the cultured Mexicans topped off the very best dishes of their cuisine with human flesh. The peaceful Peruvians used not to disdain stews of human blood for their religious feast days, in which they would knead corn bread with the blood taken from the foreheads of babes -- what pious butchers were the gentle and beautiful women devotees of that nation's religion.

In this region of the Chaco, although cannibalism may have been practiced, temporibus illis, (which cannot be proved), at the present time it is either non-existent or else must be considered reduced to its very lowest terms.

727
I shall say nothing about the custom of drinking aloja from 264
the scalp of a prisoner which has been converted into a propitiating cup of vengeance and victory.

I have seen them drink avidly of the blood of cattle 262
slaughtered for our use, but they do not feed exclusively on cattle 272

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blood or on that of other animals as some have reported; rather do they make their principal diet of fish, game, and the roots and fruits of the field with which, together with wild forest honey which is so abundant, they prepare the fermented beverages I have already spoken about.

He who spends any time among the Indians finds cause to marvel at the lack of cripples or maimed people. From this fact certain travelers have gone on to affirm that the Indians, like latter day Spartans, kill off their malformed babies. This is also the opinion of some historians.

[221] I, on the other hand, although confirming the fact of their being no cripples by my own personal observation, explain the phenomenon by attributing it to the physical and social condition in which the Indians live. A more than free life, generally sufficient food (in spite of what may be said to the contrary); the nakedness of the women -- that is, their lack of tight garments about their waists and breasts; the healthful climate (for them at least), all are physical elements conducive to the great rarity of cases of deformity in the body structure of their babies.

Furthermore, the constant state of war, the frequent surprise attacks, the custom of giving no quarter, the wild beasts and reptiles, all conspire against the handicapped who are inferior in the indispensable faculties necessary in the struggle for existence. In addition to this it is probable that malformed children are not accorded the privilege granted their normal peers, that is, that their lives be spared by victorious enemies, and they be carried off to the latters' villages there to be raised as members of the kidnapers' group and thus contribute to its strength and progress.

All this then explains sufficiently the lack of deformed individuals without the need to attribute to the Indians the habit of killing newborn babies or allowing them to die. My personal experience allows me to set down a positive happening which gives the lie to such a supposition.

In the very center of the Chaco I came upon a deaf-mute Indian who must have been a little over thirty years of age. Really, if there is any defect which makes a man completely useless and deserving of being eliminated from society, this is it. However, it is true also that it is one of those imperfections

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415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
● 273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to
721 the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting;
262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of
[227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness
231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from
241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they
579 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
533 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

At a wedding which is properly celebrated with all the attendant frills there are alcoholic beverages made from the pods of the algarrobo and vinal, and from forest honey -- regarding all of which I shall write in the following chapter. 273 585

Chapter VI

Fermented Beverages

Natural Products of Domestic Use

The algarrobo is to these parts what the chestnut tree is to Europe in its usefulness to the people who live in the region. By observation I have found that it grows in the area between one hundred and four hundred meters above sea level and between 30° and 15° of southern latitude, between the mountains and the sea. It does not like dampness, which keeps it from growing even in those places which would otherwise suit it. In dry, hot places I have come upon it even at an elevation of seven hundred meters above sea level, but always in flat country. 137

The algarrobo is found in various situations. Sometimes there are whole forests of this tree only; sometimes it grows in company with others. In my judgment it is the most widely distributed tree in the region and deserves, for this reason, and because of its great importance to have a whole area or forest zone named after it. It is to be found, in fact, growing both in forests rooted in earth built up out of the waters when these lands were raised, and in alluvial soil recently washed down.

The wood of the algarrobo is ideal for most construction purposes (except for roofing) and carpentry, but usually has the drawback of being short. There oozes from the trunk a black resin for which we have no use but the Indians do. The fruit is in the shape of a pod and contains a somewhat sweet flour which is used to make bread and fermented drinks. 137 824

There are in the region three types of algarrobo: the white kind which has pods in color and size similar to our white beans, from which a good beverage is made and the flour of which could be used. The black kind with pods like black eyed peas from which an inferior

drink is made; and the so-called [187] "patay" algarrobo whose pods, 137
like our white beans, are thick and produce a large amount of ex- 824
cellent flour with which bread -- called patay in the Quechua language --
is made. The first two have simple compound leaves, that is, each
leaf is made up of pairs of leaflets placed evenly along its axis, with
small thorns at the base of each leaf. The third type of algarrobo has
complex-compound leaves in which the secondary leaflets are sub-
divided into many pairs of almost microspoic ones, as occurs in the
churqui (Acacia cavenia), and also has thorns between ten and fifteen
centimeters long, though not large in girth.

In order to make patay (bread) which is only made in Santiago 252
and Catamarca in the basin of the Pueblos de Belen, the dry algarrobo
pod, ready for grinding, is placed under a hardwood or stone pestle
which is moved by a long lever. The pod, thus ground, is turned
into flour, but the seeds, which are extraordinarily hard, do not even
break. The flour is then sifted, poured and pressed into a pot which
has been previously heated by being put out in the sun or near a fire.
The pot is now sealed off with fine sand and then again placed in the
sun or near a fire for a short while. In ten minutes the patay is ready,
for the warming has no other object than to melt the honey contained
in the flour in order to make it coalesce into a lump, this lump be-
coming very hard once the honey cools. Thus they make loaves
weighing from four to six pounds and more, which can be packed
into saddlebags, slung over the saddle and afford a delicious if some-
what cloying food. The flour is in some ways similar to chestnut
flour. A slice of this, impaled on a knife and heated in the fire is
a really superb tidbit, both in smell and in taste. Aloja is the 273●
Argentine (1) name given to the fermented beverages of that region,

1. Cacan (?) Ed.

while in Quechua they are called chicha (2), in Mataco; hŭ-nă;

2. Chicha is made from corn. Ed. --
See: Acca and Asua. [?--Translabor]

in Mocovi: nẵ-nă and nănn-nă; and in Vilela: tsŭc-cuĕ.

In order to make this beverage, in Perũ as well as among the savage Indians, the usual thing is to chew a part of the raw-material which is then mixed in with the rest. This smaller chewed portion acts as a leavening since saliva, as we know, contains diastase, found also in the cotyledons of seeds, which converts starches into glucose or grape sugar and so makes them soluble in water and fermentable, thus producing alcohol. The Indian knows nothing about all this but being as he is a keen observer he has discovered the effect of this chewing operation, so nauseous to the whites who see it practiced.

This same process was used in China in the making of [188] bread and in the East Indies in the preparation of fermented beverages. In our own midst, who is unaware of the custom indulged in by nurses and mothers of chewing the baby's food before giving it a spoonful of it? In spite of the lack of knowledge on the part of those who do this and of its foolishness and repulsiveness in the eyes of those who see it done, this custom has a very useful end, and science puts its seal upon it.

One often sees wooden and earthenware receptacles in the Indian dwellings into which people spit the pods which they have chewed during the day. In addition to this women and children, at certain hours, set to and break and chew pods, and the small children have a great time grabbing handfuls of pods in their fat little hands, cramming them into their mouths and spitting them over and over again into the pots. Often the grownups also gather there and then the preparation of aloja is an occasion for fun. The unchewed portion is ground in a mortar, which is always made of yuchan, a tree about which I shall make some comment later. The whole lot is then passed into a mortar made of a single trunk of that same tree and water is mixed into it immediately in quantity enough to make two or three barrels of aloja at a time.

Twelve hours later the aloja is ready. It has a bitter-sweet taste and is yellowish in color. Its sharp tang makes it pleasant to the palate. I prefer it in the Chaco to any other drink, including wine itself. Taken in quantity it inebriates, but the drunkenness soon passes and leaves no hangover. At least that is the way in which I have seen it affect others.

The season for the ripening of the algarrobo pods coincides with 824
that of the vinal, which is not so good in quality but which can be used

in making aloja. The chañar ripens before the other two mentioned above and is a sweetish, round, rather small yellow fruit with a stone, which is eaten either raw or cooked. From this fruit arrope is made, which is good tasting and has, in local opinion, medicinal qualities for the treatment of coughs and asthma. The chañar tree, while it is young, has leaves and trunk similar to the tamarind; the branches look like those of the eucalyptus. 824

Shortly after the algarrobo pods comes the mistol which is similar to our azufaifo except for this difference: from a mixture of its fruits with algarrobo pod flower, patay is made, and kept in skins and well kneaded. Together with these fruits, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later, all the other fruits ripen -- in the Chaco in the hottest months which are October and December (spring and summer months) and further south, towards Tucumán, in November and February.

Through certain techniques of preservation the Indians are able to prolong the yearly period during which they can feed on this vegetable diet, particularly if the crop has been a good one. The harvest lasts between four and five months and is a time of carnival for the Indians [189]. 251

To preserve the algarrobo pods they build small huts which they place on four posts in order to supply them with proper ventilation and to keep them free of ants and other insects. It is a pleasure to see these little constructions rising above the Indians' huts in the same manner as do our towers. Each camp takes pleasure in having more of these little granaries than do its neighbors. In the same manner do they keep vinal and some roots and fruits which can and should be cooked when dry. 343

When the aloja is ready, which is usually at eleven in the morning, all the men gather about the yuchan container, seated in the Moorish fashion. Then, with two or three long-handled dry gourds they dip out the liquid and pass it around to each other. Meanwhile they talk about their affairs: about wars, the crops, news, odd bits of scandal, and guffaw at any strange happening or quid pro quo. Thus they continue for three, four or more hours. When the liquor is finished they fall upon the solid matter remaining. The women and children take no part in any of this. 273 ● [521]

They set a high value on the algarrobo pod. A famous chief, whom the whites called Granadero (Grenadier guard -- Translator) 824

137

used industrially, the yuchan and the châguar (which has fiber serviceable in making rope) [192] as they are to be found over an enormous territory and grow without need of cultivation, would be of great commercial value.

Another interesting tree that has domestic use and may some day be employed industrially is the pacara (Enterolobium timboiva). It is a tree of great beauty, very tall, of large girth and having a great deal of foliage -- it is of the mimosa family. Its fruit is a flat, oblong, twisted pod of a dark chestnut color about an inch and a half long and which contains 12 percent to 15 percent of saponin. This pod is used [388] to get the grease out of clothes and wool.

To finish as we had started, I must add that the Indians are great 273 lovers of the alcoholic beverages common among the whites, and become so drunk as to be floored. Even in this detail are they like those who are not their brothers in Christ.

Chapter VII

Wars

The Indians are much addicted to wars, it must be confessed, 721 and they are perpetually fighting; it is -- if I may be allowed the expression -- a continual giving and taking.

One war follows another, either because the vanquished wish to avenge their previous losses or because the victors have begun to enjoy their victories. Causes for war are: having fished, hunted or harvested in foreign territory, or the need to annul an offence or the hope of gain.

These wars are not strategic ones in which one battle follows another until the enemy is helpless to defend himself; rather are they surprise attacks on camps with the object of overwhelming and pillaging them and carrying off cattle, boys and sometimes even women.

This is why the camps or villages, in forested regions, always 361 have flanks and back right up against the deep woods, where, if surprised, the inhabitants may find refuge, and where it would be impossible to pursue them as there is a veritable labyrinth of paths known only to the inhabitants of the village.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

132 the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable,
we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin
137 forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these
134 kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

262 From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which
●273 forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourlica decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sieyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

314 A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

132 It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called »summer» in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI? Mataco SI7
Toba S/12

M 177 577 to the extent that the Indian comes under the influence of the whites and gets «civilized», to that extent also he loses the virtue of honesty, as he loses many other virtues characteristic of him while he is in a state of nature. This again is chiefly due to the bad example given by the whites themselves. The latter steal from one another, infringe the proprietary rights of the Indians and commit other wrongs against them. The Indians, who are on this point comparable with children, naturally think they may do the same, and their very sense of justice seems to require that the same measure as is meted to them by the whites, they may themselves measure to the latter again.

M 273 578 627 The only occasion when crimes may be committed among the Choroti are during the great drinking-feasts. When the Indians are intoxicated with algaroba beer they easily begin to quarrel with one another, and these quarrels in extreme cases may end in homicide. Now the Indians certainly regard a homicide committed in a state of inebriation rather as an accident than as a crime, for the algaroba beer is sacred and an Indian inebriated by it is looked upon as possessed by a spirit and not in the ordinary sense responsible for his acts. But the Indians are anxious to prevent such accidents and this is above all the task of the women, who never themselves drink any intoxicating-drinks. On two occasions I witnessed quarrels arising during the drinking-feasts. In one case an Indian, when excessively drunk, got mad and seized his bow and arrow to shoot another Indian on account of some old controversy. Immediately the women took hold of him, deprived him of his weapons, and compelled him to leave the scene of the feast and the whole village. He in fact left for an other village in the vicinity and remained absent for several days, when he was allowed to return to his home. The minds of the two adversaries were then perfectly tranquillized and there was no more grudge between them. In the other case also the women intervened and seized the weapons from the quarrelling men to prevent fights and manslaughter. It is usual in such cases that the offending party is sent away from the village or «exiled» for some time.

T 674 Among the more advanced *Tobas* thefts occasionally take place, but there is a question whether this phenomenon is not due to the influence of the whites, since the Tobas have on the whole been more in contact with civilization than the Choroti. In the case of smaller thefts there is no T 685 public punishment among the Tobas; the affair is left to the private concern of the person robbed and the thief. In more serious cases the Council

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noin* or *nõtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aittáh slahsa is*, the Choroti *mõhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aittáh* or *mõhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nõtta* (= *noin'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noin*.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

273
776

mind a mysterious and sacred thing. To be intoxicated by the drink is therefore equal to being internally filled with a spirit or spiritual power, and this »good spirit» will, they believe, protect the intoxicated person against supernatural evils of every kind. Thus the Tobas are wont to say of such a person that he has a *peyák nõtta nãppihe*, i.e. a good spirit or *peyák* in the brain (or more strictly speaking, in that special part of the brain which is nearest to the forehead), and other Chaco tribes have exctly the same idea. This is the true reason why the Indians celebrate every important and critical incident, birth and death, the puberty of girls, marriage, warfare, etc., among other things with excessive drinking of some fermented beer. The spirit is present in different liquors in different degrees according to the strength they possess. The best beer, in the opinion of all Indians, is the algaroba beer, because it is the strongest of all. Next to this, the Choroti and Mataco appreciate the beer brewed from the tusca and chañar most, whereas the Tobas prefer the beer made of *sandia* or water-melon. From the fruit of the tusca and the chañar the Tobas only rarely brew intoxicating drinks. Similarly maize beer, which plays such an important part in the religious mysteries of the Avas and of many other South American peoples, is not unknown to the Chaco Indians, but is less appreciated than other kinds of beer, since maize is but little cultivated by them.

The idea that a spirit resides in the fermented drink — an idea which is encountered among many South American tribes [1]) — is of course connected with the belief that the very state of ecstasy or exaltation into which a man falls when intoxicated by such a drink is of mysterious or supernatural origin. But there are different kinds of religious ecstasy, and all of them are not inspired by good spirits but some by demons. The spirit of the drink naturally manifests its character in the effects it produces in the person intoxicated by it. The Mataco, who have been most in contact with the whites, say that in their own algaroba beer there is an *aittáh slahsa is* (a good spirit), in the brandy of the whites, on the other hand, an evil and destructive demon. Consequently, when the whites get drunk on their brandy and begin to fight, the Mataco say that they are inspired by demons, and at their great »carnival» — which in Bolivia is usually celebrated amidst orgies and fights — they say, many *aittáh tavakai* (evil spirits) are moving about. It is the same

[1]) See my *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis*. Humaniora. I: 4), the chapter »Berauschende und narkotische Getränke».

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI2
Chorot SK6

with the Indian himself: when intoxicated by brandy he gets mad and is always ready for fights and outrages; on the other hand, his own native beers comparatively seldom have such bad effects. As a rule they render him happy and joyful, virile and courageous, and make him forget the troubles and hardships of life. This is the reason why, to the Indian mind, there is a *good* deity or spirit residing in the native algaroba beer. But since this deity in the first place inspires the Indian with *virile* qualities, the drinking of this as well as of most other intoxicating drinks is strictly limited to the men. Women never drink algaroba beer, except perhaps some very old women who are freed from the restrictions normally laid upon the weaker sex.

The great drinking-feasts of the Chaco Indians during the »season» will be described later on, as also the ceremonies with which the sacred drinks are prepared.

When the Chaco Indians speak of their »good spirits», however, they generally mean spirits of another kind. The medicine-men as a rule speak of these spirits in the singular, meaning thereby a mysterious personal guardian spirit of their own. Such a being is for instance the *peyák nõtta* of the *Toba* medicine-man, a kind of individual guardian spirit with whom the Indian has entered into a special relation and whom he asks for assistance in sickness and in every necessity. Among the Tobas all professional medicine-men and many of the older men are said to have such guardian spirits; even some of the women, who then exercise the profession of female sorcerers. The more the person in question has acquired power over his or her »good spirit», the more that person is in possession of what we should call supernatural powers. When, for instance, the medicine-man has to cure a sick person, he summons his own guardian spirit and by his aid expels the disease-demon from the patient's body. Similarly, those sorcerers who practise black or nefarious magic are able to harm their fellows only by the aid of their assistant spirits whom they invoke and who will despatch a spirit against their victim.

If a sorcerer wishes to harm another sorcerer, who of course also has his guardian spirit, or some other person in possession of such a spirit, he can do so only by fighting and vanquishing the assistant spirit of that person. This was especially made clear to me by the *Choroti* Indians. A sorcerer who wants to kill or harm such a person, I was told, invokes his own »good spirit»; this comes down from the heavens in the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

M C 273 462 415

We have already seen that the most appreciated of these drinks is algaroba beer, which by the Mataco and the Choroti is called *atăs*, by the Tobas again *maplyí*. The tree itself and its fruit is called *oáh* in the Mataco and the Choroti language, in the Toba language *map*. The sacred beer is prepared with the utmost care and with certain religious or magical ceremonies. At this preparation there appears a strict division of labour between men and women. Although the women are not allowed to drink of the beer, they seemingly perform the larger part of the work. They collect the fruit in the forest, carrying it home in their large caraguatá bags, and afterwards mash it in mortars. Some old women start to chew the fruit, mixing it well with saliva, whereupon they spit it out into a goat's hide, fixed in the ground by means of sticks in such a way that it forms a sort of vessel. The goat's hide is used by the Choroti and by the Argentine Mataco, whereas the Tobas and the Bolivian Mataco use a wooden trough for the purpose. Lastly, hot water is poured over the mashed fruit.

M C 273 [462]

These preparations require nearly a whole day. The most essential thing still remains, namely the fermentation, and to effect this is a duty solely incumbent on the men, since women as a rule do not take part in conjurations. The fermentation is sacred, because it means the birth of the good spirit. Now this happens in the night, but night is the time when evil spirits move about. According to the belief of the Indians, the invisible persecutors appear in great numbers in order to prevent the birth of the good spirit and interfere with the drink so that it cannot ferment and is entirely spoiled. Therefore special precautions must be taken for the critical time. The brewing of the algaroba beer for the great festivals during the algaroba season is — especially among the primitive Choroti — a matter that concerns the whole community. Hence, at the approach of night, the men arrive from all houses with their rattle gourds, sit round the hide or trough, and begin to chant a noisy, monotonous song without words, shaking the rattles in the rhythm of their chant. This ceremony is called by the Choroti *nissammaha oáh*, by the Tobas *niapilák map*, and its most conspicuous object is to prevent the spirits from spoiling the beer. Since the new moon is believed to promote fermentation, a moonlight night is preferably chosen for the ceremony. The chant is typical of the Indian conjurations in the Chaco. It is always begun in a loud voice; then the voice gradually dies down, so that the last tones are only heard as a low and distant muttering. Thereupon they start again from the beginning, and so forth. In addi-

M C [821]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

M T C 273

tion to the men shaking rattles, one or more Indians are beating drums and chanting. These noisy ceremonies are continued with short intervals during the whole night. When one party of Indians are tired and stop to rest for a moment, they are relieved by another party, since it is considered very important that there should be no interruption in the ceremonies; otherwise they would lose something of their effect. In the early morning the danger is believed to have passed; the fermentation has taken place, and the evil spirits have not been able to approach the drink and spoil it.

Although this negative object of the rites is particularly emphasized by the Indians, they also have a positive object which is indicated by the very expression »hurry on the fermentation». As we have already seen, the fruit of which the drink is made is believed to be animated by a spirit, and it is the same spirit that is active in the fermented, intoxicating beer. The rites described, while they are supposed to keep off evil spirits, are also intended to influence magically the plant-spirit itself and to bring it to its highest point of development, which is marked by the fermentation. This is partly effected through the chanting, the shaking of rattles, and the drumming, partly through the procedure of mixing the mashed fruit with saliva. The saliva really has the property of bringing about fermentation, and this phenomenon is explained by the superstitious Indian as due to the supernatural virtues which this secretion is believed to possess. Even the fact that only *old* women chew the fruit is probably not accidental. Old people have by nature a stronger magical power than the young and their saliva has therefore greater efficacy.

M T C [827 888]

The Chaco Indians not only try to promote the growth of the fruits by shaking rattles and drumming, but also by *dancing*. Thus the Toba dance *Nahót dónnaran* is not only performed in cases of sickness, but also with a view to »hurrying on» the chanar fruit (*niapilàk tàkkai*). Once I witnessed such a ceremony. The chañar fruit — next to the algaroba the most important of the fruits growing in the Chaco forests — reaches maturity in the month of October and forms the staple food of the Indians during that month. The dance was performed in the following way. The fruit gathered in during the day was spread out on cloths or big hides on the ground outside the houses, where they are generally laid to dry. The dance took place at night. A young man began to dance alone, stamping alternately with his feet on the ground, without using any rattle, and chanting at first in a low voice. Gradually his movements

T 789
T [262 824]
T [25-1]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M C 764 M [535]

chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a »sign of sorrow», but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *uáhsah* (= *eis sáhe*), i. e. »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M 764 ● 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algaroba beer is most appreciated, but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly, the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

X 539 animals and ate them raw because he had no fire to cook
X 773 them with.

In ancient times the jaguar was a woman and the rodent who stole the fire from her was a man. Later they were changed into animals.

[372] The Trickster, *Tawkxwax* put fire into the *sunchu* wood and that is why we make our fire-drills with this wood[1].

69. Origin of the Mead (Pedro)

X 539 In ancient times there was no mead. An old man tried
X 773 to make it with some honey (*nesla*). He mixed the honey
273 with water and left the mixture to ferment for one night. The next day he tasted it and found it very good. The other people did not want to taste the drink as they thought it might be poison one. The old man said. »I will drink because I am very old and if I died it would not matter.» The old man drank much of the mixture and he fell down as if dead. That night he awoke and told the people that the beer was not a poison. The men carved a larger trough (*tsemLák*) and drank all the beer they made. It was a bird who carved the first drum, he beat it all night and at dawn he was changed into a man.

70. The Arrow Bridge (Martin)

X 539 There was a very clever young man. He was good and
X 773 never did anything wrong, but people did not like him. He went away and joined some people of the old times, men who had lived long, long ago and who were very intelligent. They took him away to a city in the middle of the sea. The old men thought that the boy would never be able to leave this place, but he made a bow and some arrows. He shot first arrow into the shore opposite, then he shot a second one into the butt of the first, and then a third into the butt of

[1] The second and third part of this version has been narrated by my informant Pedro.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

/217 cont./

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [554] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned with what was going on. After an interruption, during which [273] everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [552] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

/319/

Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 199 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 598 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171]

M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
296 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
●[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

Young men seen dancing while an old medicine-man is performing a treatment are practicing the fundamentals of the art before becoming full fledged doctors. Not all succeed for the trials laid on the medicine-man's soul during the journey to the spirits are hard and many give up. 756

When a medicine-man performs his ceremonies, or as the natives say »*dice misa*», he changes himself into a white bird called *yulo* in Spanish. The medicine-man is said to transform himself into a bird, but when asked how such a change occurs without the body of the magician undergoing a change, the natives explained that only the soul of the man becomes a bird. In order to send his soul abroad in the shape of a bird the medicine-man plays for a long time on a flute made of the bone of a *yulo* bird. By so doing he creates an intimate contact between himself and the bird, but the real transformation occurs only after he has snuffed a powder called *hatax*. This intoxicating powder is prepared from the seeds of the *sebil* (*hatek*), a very common tree which grows abundantly in the Chaco and in the north of Argentina. The seeds are gathered, parched and pounded in a wooden mortar. The powder is exposed to the air a long time and then put in a calabash that has been used by medicine-men during their ceremonies. When the medicine-man has changed himself or his soul into a bird he goes into the sky »like an airplane» and calls on Rain to make him fall. To meet Rain he must enter his house through a very narrow door. 756 276 756

Just before sowing time the medicine-men go up into the sky to get rain. Without their aid the crop would dry up. Thus at the village Km. 600, all the cattle would have died had it not been for the Matako medicine-men who helped the white men by calling on the rain.

Old people say that once there was a heavy rain and some children became frightened and the Rain took them up into the heavens. A medicine-man in the form of a bird went up to bring them back.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *ăxǫ̆lĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [821] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a supernatural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made ●[278] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes [824] add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranas" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognised is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both [587] morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can [589] only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will [682] always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her
262 hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

this shared work has its cause in that the last two mentioned products must necessarily be gathered within a certain limited period and therefore the Indians have need of the combined effort of all the workers they can muster in order to harvest all they possibly can. 222 462

For the making of nets they must first, naturally, begin by making twine, which they call niñ'hioi. They get their textile material from a bromelia which in Quechua is called chaguar (a name now also used by the white settlers) and in Mataco hüiẽ. They steep the leaves of this plant in water for a time and then comb them with a clam shell. Once this has been done the residue is put out into the sun to dry and whiten. The last stage is that of twisting the fiber -- a wad of it is held in the left hand and rubbed back and forth [182] on a leg, upon which they sprinkle a little gypsum in order to avoid getting hurt. This gypsum powder is called maccotãc-muc. 283

The twine being thus ready they make not only nets with it but also ropes, which they call niñ'hioi-less, which means family or skein of threads.

Some of the Indians have special skill in making weapons, and make them as a means of barter with their companions. They use a very hard wood for the bow, and ostrich [rhea--Translator] tendons or strips of hide for the string. The arrow shaft is made of cane, the head of some hard wood, often tipped with bone and barbed like a fish hook. 411

Chapter V

Marriage Customs

Those who do not know anything about the Indians may believe that they lead morally and materially sterile lives. Yet this is not actually the case: the savage loves, hates and knows what ambition, enjoyments, dangers and glory are. He is acquainted with religion and with fear. In these primitive societies the whole gamut of human affections is experienced precisely "as among the whites," as Faustino used to say to me when I asked him about the intimate experiences of the Indian way of life. 152

During the aloja revels squabbles, fights and killings are frequent, and this not only among the Indians but among the Chaco whites also. 578

A couple of words now about the yuchan, also called palo borracho (drunken tree--Translator). It is a bombaceous tree whose scientific name is Chorisia insignis, and might well be called the cotton tree. It has a strange shape which justifies its vernacular name. The trunk is shaped like an oil jar, that is, narrow at its base, wide in the middle and narrow once more at the point where the crown forks. The trunk grows to a diameter of two meters and is covered with spiked bumps. At most it reaches a height of four or five meters and is often accompanied by a shoot growing at its base. The crown is at first made up of only two branches which later subdivide and form a wide crown of some eight, ten or more meters in diameter. The leaves are similar to those of the walnut but a little smaller and provide good shade. 137

From the bark, strips are cut which are used for tying bundles, as roofing material, to wrap and tie bunches of tobacco leaves and for any similar use. The Indians make their canoes from the trunk, all of a piece. In order to do this all they do is hollow it out with any old tool, since the wood is soft and easily worked when newly cut but later becomes harder than cork although spongy like it when dry. The Matacos use the name cuóu quiác for canoe, which in their tongue means "duck." 824 [283] [396]

But the thing which is especially interesting about the yuchan is its fruit, which in size and shape is like a lemon. When it is ripe, which usually occurs between November and January, according to its location, the lemons split into four lobes and there appears a plume-like puff of cotton, white as snow, which little by little is carried away by the wind. 137

One of these open lemons is about the size of a fist, and each tree produces hundreds of them each year.

The Indians make a limited use of this cotton, but the whites do not, although I have seen in Catamarca, where the number of these trees is small, white cloth made from this material which won prizes at the Córdoba exhibition.

In the Chaco there is an immense number of yuchans which grow mixed in with other hard-wood trees. If this cotton could be

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *alaja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *asutuha*; sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--
Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and
two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent
raiding forays."

302 "Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own
teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat
are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to
improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they
blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

262 "Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable
food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they
store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and
mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts,
crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned,
together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get
other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf
from the forest."

273 "From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
579 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their
drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have
dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor,
are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to
hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

533 "When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its
upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

The women themselves also weave the wool gathered from the few sheep they possess and arrange the natural wool colors in regular patterns of stripes or squares. They do not know how to make more ornamental figures.

In order to weave they stick four forked pieces of wood into the ground in the form of a rectangle, place a pole across each end to which they affix the warp threads and with a wooden blade about a hand breadth long thread and tamp the wool into place.

They call "weaving" potzin; the "loom" noccaléi, and the "threads" huoléi. These words, which have not the least affinity with the corresponding Spanish words, assure us that the Indians did not learn weaving from the Spaniards -- not that one should lay great stock either by similarities or by the lack of them in words to buttress a judgment of this nature (on the contrary, it happens that the Mataco always do all they can to keep from adopting foreign words to express new things, preferring to use their own words with small changes) but the fact of the matter is that we are not here confronted by one of these circumlocutions. Another possible cause for error might be found in the great difficulty which they have to pronounce words as we do. Furthermore there is the habit of taking Spanish words and modifying them to suit their own language as when they make from "cabra" [goat--Translator] caila, and from Pedro, Peiló.

All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; güu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something; for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lúték; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-ʾhi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M ● 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M 415 M 531

M 346 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 323 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Mataco SI?
Ashluslay SK5

A
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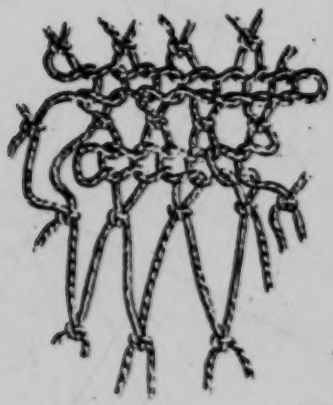
M
286

1.

2.



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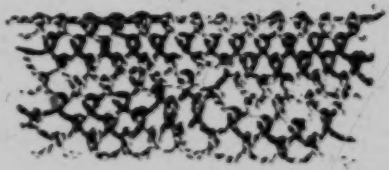

4 a.

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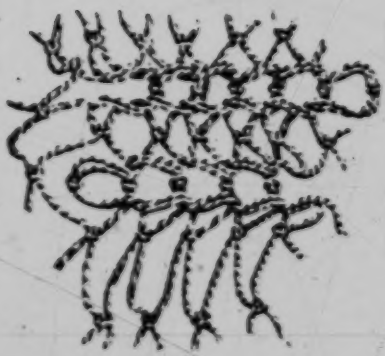


3 b.

4 c.

Fig. 60. Specimens of technique in the bags and netting in El Gran Chaco.

1. Reef knots.
2. Sheet-bend.
3 a. R. M. (A. 1538) Ashluslay.
3 b. R. M. (A. 1835) "
4 a. R. M. (M. 191) Mataco.
4 b. R. M. (A. 1389). Ashluslay.
4 c. R. M. (A. 1387). "

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909) 1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Ashluslay SK5

A
C
M
286

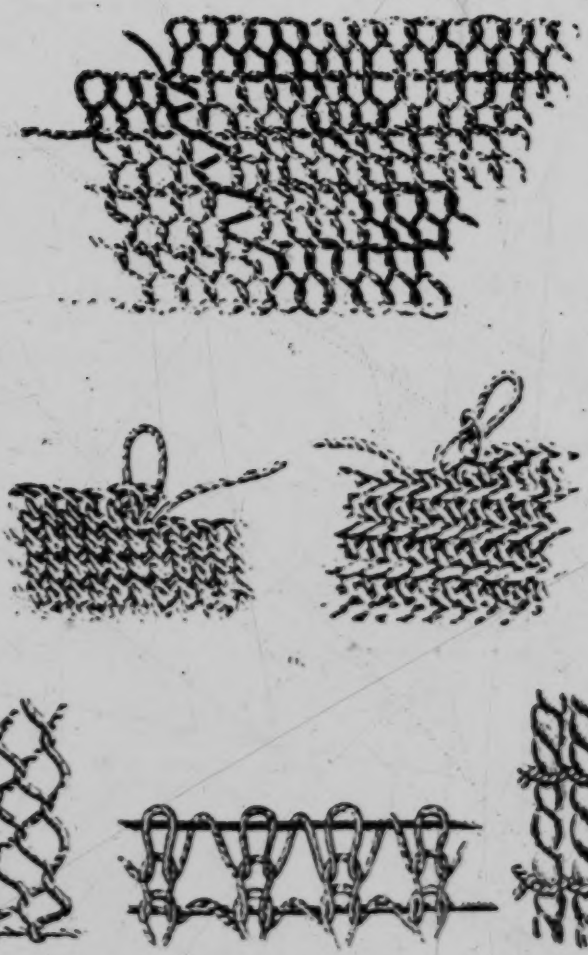


Fig. 60. Specimens of the technique in the bags and netting in El Gran Chaco.

5. R. M. (M. 192) Mataco.
6. G. M. (D. 030). Choroti.
7. R. M. (A. 1494). Ashluslay.
8. G. M. (13.1.09) Mataco.
9. G. M. (A. 1428). Ashluslay.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI7

Weaving.

A C 286 The tribes from whom I have made collections on my journeys all know how to weave, with the probable exception of the Siriono. There are in S. America a number of Indians who do not weave. Among these are the Tierra del Fuego tribes and some Gês-peoples.

Many of the Indian tribes I have visited only weave bands. Such are the Chacobo, Huanyám, Huari and Yuracáre. Weaving with ornamental borders (Fig. 27) is only found in the Chaco, and it is evident that weaving among those tribes is on a much higher plane than among the tribes north of Sta. Cruz de la Sierra. This is plainly due to the influence of the mountain civilization to the west. Specimens of weaving with these borders are in my collections from the Choroti, Ashluslay, Chané, Mataco, Quichua and Aymara. They are widely met with in the old excavations in Peru. Among Indians now living I know of such fabrics among the Mbayá[1]) and the Lengua[2]), besides the tribes mentioned here. This is manifestly an element of civilization received by the Choroti and Ashluslay from the old area of civilization in the west.

It is remakable that we find in the Chaco, too, among the (*A*) Ashluslay bands woven according to the Kelim technique with open slits (Fig. 64). Otherwise this technique is not known among Indians now living in S. America, but only from the (A) old area of civilization in the west. (Map 38).

I have no loom in my collection from the Choroti or Ashluslay. From the latter tribe I photographed one which I had not the opportunity of acquiring[3]).

M 286 From the Mataco, who are closely connected with these tribes, I have several looms of which two distinct types are here illustrated. As we see, the warp is drawn differently in each of these. In the loom (Fig. 63) the warp-threads run

[1]) Boggiani, fig.
[2]) Grubb, fig.
[3]) See »Indianerleben», fig. 52.

[text continues on p. 208]

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Mataco SI7

286

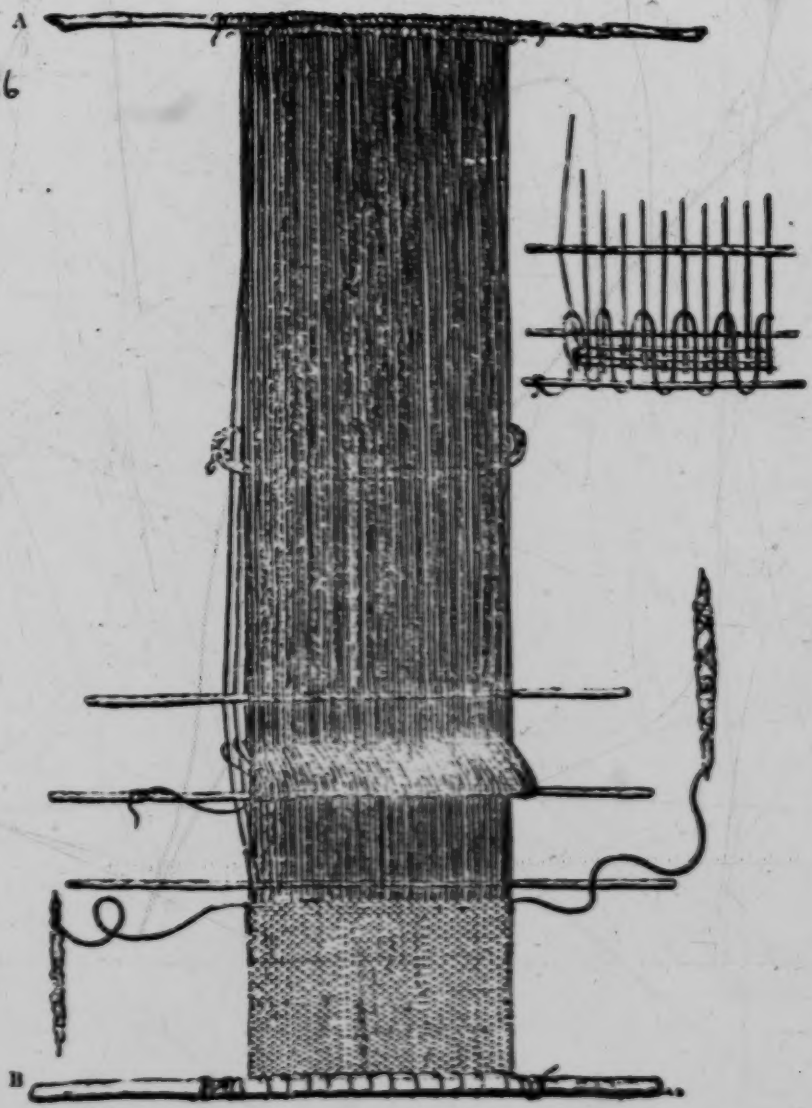


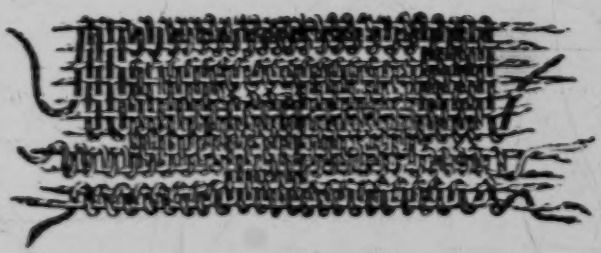
Fig. 62. Loom. Mataco R. M. (M. 1231). The warp in the diagram somewhat shortened. Full length of the loom 2.21 metres.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909) 1919
SK6 Choroti :
Mataco SI7
Ashluslay SK5

A
M
286

63.

64 a.



64 b.

Fig. 63. Loom. Mataco R. M. (M. 1230). The warp in the diagram somewhat shortened. Full length of the loom 1.33 metres.
» 64 a. Band woven in the Kelim technique with open slits. Ashluslay.
» 64 b. Enlargement of a.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Mataco SI 7

M 286 round the pins A and B so that the fabric takes the shape of a ring when complete. The warp was drawn thus in the Ashluslay loom I saw, and this is also the case in some looms of the Chané and Chiriguano and in all the looms of the Yuracáre, Chacobo and Guarayú (Pauserna). I have looms from the tribes named in my collections. MAX SCHMIDT[1]) has described a loom of the same type from the Paressi-Kabiši, and, according to the same author, this kind of loom is also found among the Arawaks on the Rio Negro and among the Tereno Indians. MAX SCHMIDT writes of this type of loom: »After my late experiences among the Paressi-Kabiši I am more and more of the opinion that we must consider the type of loom in question to be an appurtenance of the old Arawak civilization which, as the latter progressed, passed on to more primitive tribes.» The fact that such looms, as far as I know, have not been found in Peru[2]) corroborates this view, as also the fact of their occurrence in N.E. Bolivia, where most of the Peruvian culture-elements occurring in the Chaco are wanting[3]). The introduction of this type of loom from whites or negroes appears to me quite out of the question.

It is also used by the Lengua[4]). We know that the Arawaks in the Chaco, formerly at least, were great weavers, from the accounts of old authors[5]).

The loom depicted in Fig. 62, on the other hand, is exactly like the Peruvian loom which MAX SCHMIDT has de-

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[1]) (4) p. 214.

[2]) See looms: MAX SCHMIDT (6) and CRAWFORD.

[3]) Looms from present-day Indians in S. America, judging by the few comparisons made by Max Schmidt, would seem to be uncommon in the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. And I suppose the same holds good for most museums.

[4]) GRUBB, Pl. on Page 66.

[5]) »Las Guanas son las principales hilanderas y tejedoras de sus bellas mantas». Aguirre, p. 478.

[Text continues on p. 211]

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909) 1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Ashluslay SK5
211

picted from Pachacamac[1]). In my travels I have only seen it among the Mataco.

I am sorry I do not possess in my collections a loom with half-complete fabric with ornamental borders, nor a half-complete band in the Kelim technique. Since the »Arawak» loom is universally found in the Chaco, I think it more likely that the Choroti and Ashluslay originally learned the art of weaving from the Arawaks (Chané) than that it passed on to them from the mountain civilization. It is, however, certain that their weaving industry developed under the influence of the Mountain civilization.

Pottery.

All the tribes I have visited on my journeys possess earthenware vessels made by themselves, except the Cháma and the Tambopata-Guarayo, who are identical with or nearly related to them. PATER SCHMIDT[2]) mentions the following tribes as not having any pottery: — Kayapó, Botokudo, Ona, Yahgan, and Alikuluf. The Tehuelche no longer have any pottery, though they had formerly. With the exception of the last-mentioned it is, therefore, only the lowest tribes who are without pottery. The absence of pottery among the Tehuelche is due to their life being so bound up with that of the horse; fragile earthenware is unsuitable for an equestrian people.

The Chaco tribes here dealt with build up their earthenware vessels in layers out of clay ropes[3]). This method of shaping the vessels I have seen among the following tribes: — Choroti, Mataco, Ashluslay, Chiriguano, Chané, Quichua-Mestizos and Huari; and this is the usual method everywhere in S. America where the pottery is uninfluenced by white civilization. PATER SCHMIDT[4]) mentions this method from several tribes in different parts of S. America. The

[1]) (6), p. 7.
[2]) p. 1024.
[3]) See »Indianerleben», p. 144.
[4]) p. 1017.

∞ The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M ● "The men usually go about stark naked without a stitch on, 175 although their skins are so tanned by the rough weather that they ●291 seem to be covered by animal hide or leather, particularly the old men, who are numerous, because the inclemencies of weather do not harm them, they having been used to such rigors since childhood. I saw in Santa Fé the head of a Mocobí Indian, who must have been about 40 years old, the skin of which was more than half a finger thick. The women go about entirely covered, from head to toe, in animal skins, and the principal women attire themselves in cloth made from a pliant plant larger than the agave, which in this province is called "chaguar" and grows wild. From it they make a thread similar to that used by cobblers, and then weave their clothes to which the daughters and wives of the more important men add some black and C M white ornamentation. From this same fibre they also make jars which, [445] cemented over with wax, can hold water pretty well and also the beverages with which they get drunk.

C "All the women paint their faces, breasts and arms in the M same manner as the moorish women of Africa and Spain, and those 302 of most consequence do this in intricate patterns which remain in 175 [304] the skin permanently, for their mothers from the day they are born start to fix the dyes in their very flesh with the help of the large sharp bones of certain fish. They also use a dark blue dye, although not to such an extent, on their male children. In addition to this the mothers pluck the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, leaving a completely bald swath three fingers wide running from the forehead to the crown of the head on which the hair never grows again. Thus do the Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies and Aquilotes go about, both men and women, and the latter are extremely ugly as a consequence although, to their thinking, they are very beautiful. And in order that the women pull their hair out, the Devil is wont to appear to them in the form of an Indian woman who comes out of the nearest forest covered with a net and tells them that those who will not allow themselves to be plucked are not to eat fish, for should they do so, they will die. [577] So that if some C M woman, fearing the pain, resists having her hair pulled, she later [262] allows it so as to be able to eat fish which is their favorite food. Others of these Indian nations do not make these pathlike inroads in

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own
291 teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
296 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
415 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
[276] bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its
222 upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
• 291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

"There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any 622 621 authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

"They marry without any visible ceremony and without 582 formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, 591 doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having 684 affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

"It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a peo- 774 ple so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

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out chunks of flesh, and can even [180] be of some slim service, similar to that which is told concerning that fellow in the "Ricciardetto." It is an ovoid, laterally flattened fish. The ray is round, vertically flattened and has three barbs on its tail. It can make a very painful and dangerous wound with the middle barb when the fish is stepped on and lashes out with its tail. Some grow to be over a meter in diameter. It lies on the bottom of quiet pools, as close as it can to the bank; it would seem to be viviparous. The yacaré, a kind of crocodile, will without warning bite the leg or arm of an unfortunate father, drag him to the bottom and there devour him.

So it is that bathing, which was so necessary to cool ourselves off in the suffocating heat, was always embittered by the presence of these maneaters.

The married woman is faithful to her husband by inclination, education and fear. There are tales of terrible revenges wreaked by husbands upon their unfaithful wives, over whom they have power of life and death. While they are single they can be and often are free in their ways. It cannot be doubted that the whites attract their interest, if matters of racial difference do not intervene, for the poorest white is always in a position to give better presents than is the richest chief.

These women love decorations and clothing, but have no use for skirts or corsets. They wrap themselves from the waist down in a blanket, and hold it up with a belt or cord which is hidden behind the fold of cloth. In addition to this they know how to distribute these rags in such a way as to accentuate their good figure and yet at the same time not encumber themselves, a skill not to be expected on first seeing them. Their dress consists of robes, and when they have any they put them all on, be it winter or summer, partly because of the nomadic existence they lead and partly because they like to do so. One might say that the saying: what wards off cold also wards off heat, is particularly applicable to them.

Both men and women love bright colors (particularly red) and variety, but they also like white cloth. When they put on any garment they always do so in such a way as to leave one arm free. The women have a high regard for the kind of shirts which we wear.

The women make their own ornaments out of leather and broken shells, achieving a certain elegance of form, though with a greater or lesser degree of rusticity. They wear, from childhood, a sort of

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

The women themselves also weave the wool gathered from the few sheep they possess and arrange the natural wool colors in regular patterns of stripes or squares. They do not know how to make more ornamental figures.

In order to weave they stick four forked pieces of wood into the ground in the form of a rectangle, place a pole across each end to which they affix the warp threads and with a wooden blade about a hand breadth long thread and tamp the wool into place.

They call "weaving" potzin; the "loom" noccaléi, and the "threads" huoléi. These words, which have not the least affinity with the corresponding Spanish words, assure us that the Indians did not learn weaving from the Spaniards -- not that one should lay great stock either by similarities or by the lack of them in words to buttress a judgment of this nature (on the contrary, it happens that the Mataco always do all they can to keep from adopting foreign words to express new things, preferring to use their own words with small changes) but the fact of the matter is that we are not here confronted by one of these circumlocutions. Another possible cause for error might be found in the great difficulty which they have to pronounce words as we do. Furthermore there is the habit of taking Spanish words and modifying them to suit their own language as when they make from "cabra" [goat--Translator] caila, and from Pedro, Peiló.

All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

In subtropical land like the Chaco, where the weather is often very hot especially during the summer-times, dress is naturally of the most simple kind. Both among the Mataco, the Choroti, and the Tobas, the most important article of the man's clothing is a small cotton waist-cloth which serves as a covering and protection for the genitals. In addition to this waist-cloth the Mataco and the Choroti formerly wore a kind of broad fringed leather-belt round the loins, whereas the Tobas covered the genitals with a small apron of skin or stuff. The rest of the body is among all the tribes generally kept entirely naked or is only covered by the usual necklaces and other ornaments, or by red *urucú*-painting. When the weather is cold, and on festival occasions, the men also wear big woollen blankets with interwoven linear patterns mostly in red colour. The blankets of the Lenguas and other tribes in eastern Chaco often show designs denoting venomous snakes etc., but such patterns are unknown to the Choroti, and where they are found they have originally been obtained from the interior of the country. Weaving is among all Chaco tribes exclusively a work incumbent on the women.

The Choroti man adjusts his blanket in different ways. In cold or wet weather it is wrapped round the body so as to cover one or both shoulders; when it is hot, he allows it to fall in a double fold from his waist, where it is either fastened by a belt or by tucking the folds of one corner into the other.

The usual clothing of the women is a short cotton petticoat reaching from the waist to a little below the knees, the upper part of the body remaining unclothed. This petticoat formerly consisted of deer or nutria skins sewn together, but since the present-day Choroti are poor hunters such skin loin-clothes are now rarely seen. According to Mr. Hunt, young Choroti girls have nowadays adopted the female dress of the Chiriguano (Avas), a kind of sleeveless, waistless gown caught at the shoulders with a couple of safety pins and known under the name of *tipoy*. At the time when I travelled in the Chaco these *tipoys* were only known to the women among the Bolivian Tobas, but not to the Choroti women, who always kept the upper part of their body uncovered and, in opposition to the Toba women, never showed any shame at displaying their bare breasts. A few necklaces, beads, or twisted feathers replace clothing on these nude parts of the body. Many of the personal ornaments of both men and women have the character of amulets or charms and will therefore be dealt with later on in connection with the religion of the natives.

Much the same may be said of the dress of the Mataco and the Tobas. Both of these tribes, and especially the Mataco, have been influenced

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

by the whites even in their dress, but those sub-tribes who still live in a state of nature keep the body almost wholly uncovered or only wear clothes consisting of animals' skins or cotton or woollen waist-clothes and mantles of their own make, just as is the case with the Choroti. The Catholic missionary Cardús, who visited the Tobas about fifty years ago, relates that the majority of the men used to go entirely naked, only wearing a small apron of skin or stuff. When they went out hunting or to battle they wore a jacket or a breast-plate of tiger's skin. Although nowadays the Tobas commonly use articles of clothing obtained from the whites, they are still frequently seen to go almost naked, only wearing a small waist-cloth, especially when the weather is hot or when they are working. The women, according to the same writer, used to have a small apron of fox, deer, or tiger's skin tied at the waist, which reached down to the knees. The hairy side of the skin was turned inwards and the outside was painted in different colours and figures. Nowadays, as I have already mentioned, the dress of the Toba and the Mataco women in Bolivia is the *tipoy*, a sort of long gown or shirt made of red or some other brightly coloured stuff which covers the whole body leaving only the arms bare.

Both the Choroti and the Mataco men on certain occasions wear a kind of coarse shirt made of the fibres of the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). These shirts are mainly worn as a protection for the body against the thorny bushes when wandering in the forests, but also as armour in battle, since the arrows of the enemy are supposed not to penetrate these thick shirts. As a protection for the feet again the men, when hunting in the forest, sometimes wear a sort of sandal or leggings roughly made of deer or tapir hide. The head is always kept uncovered by the Chaco tribes or is only covered by ostrich plumes and the purely ornamental headgear which forms part and parcel of festive attire.

The houses of the Pilcomayo tribes are all of the same exceedingly primitive construction, or at any rate have originally been of the same type. They are round, conical, or beehive-shaped huts, constructed by a number of boughs of trees fixed in the ground in a circle and tied together at the upper ends. This erection is covered with rushes, grass, and palm-leaves down to the ground so as to form a rough thatch. A small opening is left for an entrance or door, which is so narrow that the inhabitants are obliged to enter the hut on all fours. The whole hut, varying from six to ten feet high in the centre, is too low to allow a man to stand erect, and the grass thatch so loose that the abode offers only a poor shelter

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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A settlement of Mataco Indians. Mataco-Noctenes. Bolivia.

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A Mataco Indian dressed in a caraguata shirt.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti. Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsel*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious.

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuéle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not ornaments in the civilized sense of the word.

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

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Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *caraguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

[222]
[415]

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together
[591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily,
[844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the
[585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are
[847] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final
[581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *enatsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[593] Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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[152] in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

[157]

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[173]
837 The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

Plate IX

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[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI7

age of Herrera. The Spaniards must have thought them peculiar, since SIMON, who as a rule does not go into the details of ethnographical objects, decribes them minutely. It was on the R. Orinoco that the Indians wore them. They must also have been in use in other parts than Venezuela and the Chaco, though not noticed there, since it is improbable that the Indians in the Chaco and in Venezuela should have indepently hit upon the use of such stockings.

A
C
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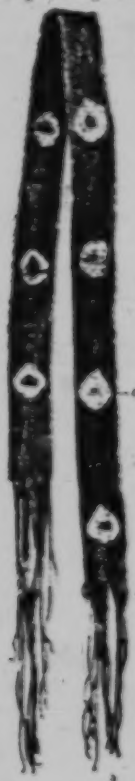
The Ashluslay and the Choroti wear *girdles*, now made of wool, now of leather.

The woven girdles in S. America belong to the westerly cultural elements. We find them in old graves on the Peruvian coast[1]). I have seen them among the Aymara, Quichua, Chiriguano, Chané, Mataco[2]), Choroti, Ashluslay, Toba, and Tapiete. They are known from the



M
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Fig. 30. Girdle coloured by »tying round»-dyeing. Mataco. R. M. (M. 50). 1/10.

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cienagas con que se defendian de vnos peces que los Españoles llamaron Caribes por ser tan fieros, y atreuidos q̄ hasen presa en todo lo que topan dentro del agua: y assiendo destos nudos quando entrauan los Indios a pescar, quedaua libre la carne de sus vocas. SIMON. p. 224.

[1]) CHILE (2).

[2]) The Mataco Indians occasionally dye the woven girdle in a way that is of anthropo-geographical interest. They use the »tying round» method of dyeing, which is as follows: Those parts of the material that are to remain undyed, are firmly bound round, whereupon the material is dipped in the dye. The parts »tied round» remain undyed (Fig. 30 a) This method was in use on the Peruvian coast, as well as in the Chaco. A piece of material dyed in this way was brought home by STOLPE (R. M.) It was presumably found at Ancon. The same method is known to the Quichua-Mestizos on Mt. Calilegua in N. Argentina, and has thus, as far as can be judged, reached the Chaco from the mountain culture.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Mataco 517

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Fig. 66. A. Mataco-Vejos woman impressing a finger-print ornament on the rim of an earthenware vessel.

4: Nino--422 M-3 (1893-1911) 1912 SF10 Chiriguano
Mataco SI 7

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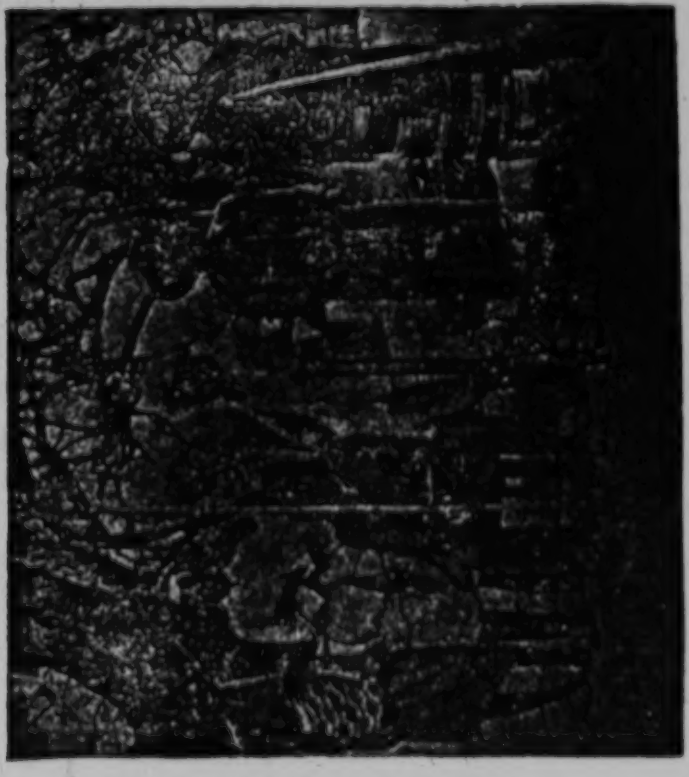

Group of Mataco Indians

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

careta (big armadillo) or the skin of an alligator in the house. The disease will think that the animals are there and will not go into the house.

a) *The Treatment of Disease*

I attended a ceremony for the treatment of disease. The ceremony took place in front of some huts, the space was closed in by awnings and cloth. Inside the enclosure were the patient, the medicine-man and a certain number of individuals who assisted the latter. The patient, an old man, was sitting in the center of the space, his body carefully covered with cloth. The medicine-man stood near him and while murmuring incantations blew on the patient's body through his half clenched hand, beginning with his back, then the shoulders, the face and so on. In the meantime four or five men were dancing without interruption and made all the noise they could with a belt of big bells. They had tied to their feet anklets of deer hoofs and wore around their waists belts of ostrich feathers and on their heads were diadems. One of them held in his hand a bunch of ostrich feathers.

Their dance consisted of a cadenced and half-jumping walk with slightly bent knees. Some dancers went forward or backward while others stayed in the same spot. During the ceremony the medicine-man received the help of another old man who was also squatting at the patient's side. He began muttering incantations and blowing on the sick man as hard as he could. After one hour of this utterly exhausting exercise, the medicine-man went to a pot full of rice which was carefully concealed by a sheet near the patient. He crouched under the sheet and recited in a supplicative voice a long incantation over the food. Afterwards he blew on the rice with all his strength. He then offered goodly portions of it to all who had taken part in the ceremony. Then the medicine-man went to two *caraguatá* bags full of dresses. He covered them with a cloth under which he crouched. He

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

pronounced the same incantation, blew on the dresses which were unfolded and taken away. On the heap of dresses had been placed a gun wrapped in a red belt richly inlaid with shells. One of the dancers seized the gun and slinging it over his shoulder executed a dance bearing a certain likeness to the one he had done before. The dancers were relatives of the sick man, probably his sons.

b) *Treatment of Disease*

A rich woman who was seriously ill was cured by five renowned medicine men. A big open space of about fifteen feet square was cleared not far from her house. Wooden posts were erected and a sort of tent set up. One of the posts, about 20 feet high, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentine flag. Around the tent were placed the objects required by the disease, those which are supposed to please him, a mosquito net, a weaving loom, an old suitcase, pieces of gaudily colored cloth, a saddle, a soldier's coat, a lamp, a lance or a gun. A little further away fires were burning where the disease's food was being prepared and a pail of water was being heated for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a pile of hay and old rags. She had put on her best dress and was covered with ritual ornaments. The five shamans, who were old men, were equally adorned with feather belts, rattles, tropical helmets and other precious objects. The lower part of their faces was painted black.

There were also some twenty dancers wearing feathers, red belts adorned with shells, rattles, caps, red pieces of cloth, whistles and old broken watches, while perhaps ten old women ran about holding rags in their hands and one even held an umbrella. Everybody, including the sick person, danced and sang, at times the medicine-men and the sick woman stopped, they blew on her and the dancing was resumed. After a while the chief medicine-man whistled on

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

755 ing to the disease while an old woman, who was a magician, sang and blew on the patient. The others were talking among themselves without paying any attention to what was happening. After a pause, during which everybody drank some of the wine required by the disease, a singing man started to run around the patient, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine-man spoke once more with disease while the medicine-woman continued blowing on the patient and another medicine-man placed around the head of the patient front pages of illustrated papers and popular novels. The man who was running stopped and the chief medicine-man started talking with the others. Everybody sat down and drank some water, then two women began to walk rapidly around the others while they sang. One of them stopped and after a short while the other [535] one stopped too. Then all who were present started dancing. The dance was interrupted only by the coughing of the patient who seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. She actually died during the ceremony. Immediately after her [764] death the dance stopped. The old women ran about singing and shaking their rattles. Two men laid the dead woman on her right side and folded her legs and arms. They wrapped her in the pieces of cloth on which she had been lying and she was taken to her home. The medicine-men undressed quietly while the women of the family uttered lamentations.

c) *General Expulsion of Disease*

755 The ceremony for general expulsion of disease took place
292 early in the morning in the open air, far from all houses. It was performed by all the medicine-men of the village stand-
[534] ing in a row. All were holding in their hands a rattle-gourd and a bone whistle. Some were provided with strips of cloth to which were attached rattles; the strips were worn across the chest or hung at the elbow. Others wore ceremonial shirts, some wore shirts made of *caraguatá* fiber and one

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

wore a red knitted shirt of wool decorated with shells. Many wore on their foreheads frontlets trimmed with feathers. Another ceremonial accessory worn by most of them consisted of a bunch ostrich or *potsax* feathers. Two especially famous medicine-men had their faces painted black and red and on the hat of one of them were ostrich feathers. Naturally among the performers were a number of women, some of whom had their cheeks painted red. In front of the performer's row some spears had been stuck into the ground with the points downward. A spear with the point upward was also stuck in the ground at the same distance away as the others. During the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was fixed to the spear with the head pointed up. When I arrived I noticed in front of the row a young man who was not a magician. He was grinding into a calabash the *hatax* seeds from which the medicine-men later took pinches.

The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical to that sung by the medicine-men when curing diseases. The singing was punctuated by the rattling of the gourds and from time to time by the clacking of hoof and rattle necklaces and the whistling of the flutes. Each blowing of the whistle indicated a new phase in the traditional sequence of events associated with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine-man, its arrival or departure from a given place). The rattle-gourd is sometimes brandished in a theatening manner as though to scare away an invisible being. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, some of the performers took a snuff of *hatax* powder. Those who had bunches of feathers stretched them forward making the same gesture which has already been described when speaking of the rattles. One of the performers was running in front and behind his colleagues, holding a bunch of feathers in his hand and dusting them off from head to foot. He was assisted by another who was holding bells and rattles which he shook behind his companions. After they had taken a snuff of *hatax* the performers went on singing, shak-

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air
756 rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medi-
783 cine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were
796 arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone
[534] whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked
[242] over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war
[237] shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand.
[302] The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mxsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/214 cont./

755 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires
554 were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments.
[292] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing
[301] feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious
[302] objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in
755 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red
554 cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women
535 were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine
755 men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a
554 stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

Plate VIII

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A. The medicine men sing to the rhythm of the maracas.

B. Threats by the medicine men; a whistle announcing a transformation.

[End Plate 1]

Plate IX

755
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[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI 7

A
C
M
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The leather girdle has, as is natural, a southern distribution. Thus, we find it among the Lengua[1]).

The Choroti, Mataco and Ashluslay men always have a little bag, in which they carry their pipe, tobacco, small tools, trinkets, etc. This custom is to be found among many tribes throughout S. America, though by no means among all.

Other tribes, again, though they have little bags of different kinds, do not always carry them, as the Choroti, Mataco and Ashluslay do, for which reason I assume that this custom, too, reached the Chaco under the cultural influence of the tribes in the Andes.

Of the following tribes whom I visited on my travels, the men always carry a little bag: Ashluslay, Aymara, Chimane, Choroti, Mataco, Quichua, Tapiete and Toba.

The Choroti and the Ashluslay have several forms of bags. As a rule these are made of caraguatá. The bags of the Choroti are occasionally made of wool.

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[1]) Hawthorn, p. 282.

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out chunks of flesh, and can even [180] be of some slim service, similar to that which is told concerning that fellow in the "Ricciardetto." It is an ovoid, laterally flattened fish. The ray is round, vertically flattened and has three barbs on its tail. It can make a very painful and dangerous wound with the middle barb when the fish is stepped on and lashes out with its tail. Some grow to be over a meter in diameter. It lies on the bottom of quiet pools, as close as it can to the bank; it would seem to be viviparous. The yacaré, a kind of crocodile, will without warning bite the leg or arm of an unfortunate father, drag him to the bottom and there devour him.

So it is that bathing, which was so necessary to cool ourselves off in the suffocating heat, was always embittered by the presence of these maneaters.

The married woman is faithful to her husband by inclination, 83] education and fear. There are tales of terrible revenges wreaked by husbands upon their unfaithful wives, over whom they have power of life and death. While they are single they can be and often are free in their ways. It cannot be doubted that the whites attract their inter- 60] est, if matters of racial difference do not intervene, for the poorest white is always in a position to give better presents than is the richest chief.

These women love decorations and clothing, but have no use for 29] skirts or corsets. They wrap themselves from the waist down in a blanket, and hold it up with a belt or cord which is hidden behind the fold of cloth. In addition to this they know how to distribute these rags in such a way as to accentuate their good figure and yet at the same time not encumber themselves, a skill not to be expected on first seeing them. Their dress consists of robes, and when they have any they put them all on, be it winter or summer, partly because of the nomadic existence they lead and partly because they like to do so. One might say that the saying: what wards off cold also wards off heat, is particularly applicable to them.

Both men and women love bright colors (particularly red) and [822] variety, but they also like white cloth. When they put on any garment they always do so in such a way as to leave one arm free. The women have a high regard for the kind of shirts which we wear.

The women make their own ornaments out of leather and broken 30] ● shells, achieving a certain elegance of form, though with a greater 29] or lesser degree of rusticity. They wear, from childhood, a sort of

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

The women themselves also weave the wool gathered from the few sheep they possess and arrange the natural wool colors in regular patterns of stripes or squares. They do not know how to make more ornamental figures.

In order to weave they stick four forked pieces of wood into the ground in the form of a rectangle, place a pole across each end to which they affix the warp threads and with a wooden blade about a hand breadth long thread and tamp the wool into place.

They call "weaving" potzin; the "loom" noccaléi, and the "threads" huoléi. These words, which have not the least affinity with the corresponding Spanish words, assure us that the Indians did not learn weaving from the Spaniards -- not that one should lay great stock either by similarities or by the lack of them in words to buttress a judgment of this nature (on the contrary, it happens that the Mataco always do all they can to keep from adopting foreign words to express new things, preferring to use their own words with small changes) but the fact of the matter is that we are not here confronted by one of these circumlocutions. Another possible cause for error might be found in the great difficulty which they have to pronounce words as we do. Furthermore there is the habit of taking Spanish words and modifying them to suit their own language as when they make from "cabra" [goat--Translator] caila, and from Pedro, Peiló.

All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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A settlement of Mataco Indians. Mataco-Nocténes. Bolivia.

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142
301

A Mataco Indian dressed in a caraguatá shirt.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

Among the *Mataco*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruhák*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *ovaittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets,[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich, *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 231.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti. Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsel*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious.

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not »ornaments« in the civilized sense of the word.

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

and they are not even meant to be decorations. Among the Choroti it was no rare thing to see old men and women — especially when they were suffering from some pulmonary catarrh or cough, or from rheumatism — wearing a cord or strap bound tightly round the chest. The idea appeared to be that the demon who had entered into the chest and caused the evil should be forced to leave the body or at least prevented from penetrating further. On one occasion I met an old woman whose right forearm had been paralyzed, probably through a fit of apoplexy. She had a dirty woollen band tied round the arm at the wrist, and when I wanted to remove the useless thing, she would not allow it, declaring that it was »good». I soon learnt that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and realised that the band was »good» as a sort of charm against the demon. Just as civilized people may, in a case of snake-bite, apply a ligature or cord round the bitten limb above the wound so as to prevent the poison from spreading, so the Indians consider such ligatures as preventive of evil spirits. Among the Choroti the band is not put on with any ceremonies, but probably the material itself is supposed to have some mysterious power. However this may be, in these cords or bands tied round the breast or the arms, we have, I think, the most simple specimens of bracelets, girdles, and other magical ornaments of the same type used by the Indians.

In addition to the magical ornaments here touched upon the Chaco Indians use various kinds of amulets and charms consisting of the tusks or claws of the jaguar or other wild animals, in feathers of birds, mussel shells etc., but I shall not dwell upon this side of the practical religion of the Indians. What I have still to pay particular attention to are their funeral rites and ceremonies.

They were as close to the patient as possible and were muttering a low and monotonous chant, marking the rhythm with movements of their bodies. The medicine-man sang in a loud voice and shook rhythmically at regular intervals a belt from which hung hoofs and metal rattles. He brought his instrument quite close to the possessed woman then pulled it back against himself. At a certain moment he pressed the girl's legs with his arms and let the bells tinkle behind her. The poncho was suddenly taken away and the possessed girl burst into tears. I could then observe that she was richly attired and dressed in red. On her head were several broad red belts to which were sewn shell discs. Around her neck and across her breast she wore some collars made of shells and white glass beads in a meshlike pattern.

The medicine-man got up, with the assistance of the spectators, and blew with all his strength on the body of the possessed woman. Instead of becoming quiet she sobbed harder than ever and threw herself into the arms of one of her aunts. Each time she behaved in this manner the medicine-man blew and shook his rattle. As she seemed to be about to fall into a swoon they let her sit down carefully and at her side her relatives sat speaking kindly to her as though to console or quiet her. Then the girl, her aunts and the medicine-man were covered with the same red poncho, the end of which one of the spectators kept in his hand moving it up and down. The medicine-man sang his vociferous chant and shook his bells against his patient once more.

When the poncho was removed I noticed that the woman seemed calmed. She was leaning her head against the shoulder of one of her aunts and nobody spoke. After a while she started to complain again. The medicine-man immediately shook his bells and his assistants consoled her in low voices. One of the women took away all her ornaments, folded them carefully and put them into a bag. Those present remained sitting for some time without uttering a word. The silence was broken only by the medicine-man blowing

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

on the sick woman. Then, as she seemed to have quited down, they started smoking and talking together. The possessed woman even accepted a cigarette.

Observations made by natives during the performance: The adornments are worn by the patient on behalf of the spirit who is fond of the colors. The songs and the noise of the bells are also intended to please the spirit who, charmed by the ornaments and the noise, gets quieter and leaves the patient.

During this treatment another group of about eight Indians were participating in a similar ceremony. They were dancing around a kind of improvised altar which consisted of a stick surrounded by four smaller ones forming a cross. The central stick was topped by palm leaves, the ends of which were wrapped in paper strips painted red. The four other sticks bore palm leaves painted red with the ends cut off. These sticks were inserted into wooden stands painted alternately red and black and connected in pairs by transverse rods. The whole structure was resting on some rags. A rolled poncho belonging to the medicine-man had been laid near the central stick. The ground for the ceremony had been carefully swept. According to my informant the central stick contained the injurious element which had caused the disease. That stick was supposed to be loaded with bad influences and I was warned not to touch it.

The dancers wore different costumes. Two of them had belts of ostrich feathers, and feather wreaths on their heads. In addition they wore bells and rattles on their breasts, around their loins and their ankles. Around their necks they wore necklaces of sea shells and in one hand they held a bunch of ostrich feathers. The other dancers wore their ordinary clothes with the exception of their headbands and the bells and feathers they wore on their ankles.

When I arrived they were dancing in a circle around the altar, from right to left, looking straight ahead. Their dance step might be defined as a jerky jog-trot. They accompanied

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutihll*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *sawatlauk*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
[534] and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence intimate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
583 836 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of
[582] sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with head-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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836

son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *cavagnati* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

[222]
[415]

/214 cont./

755 554 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments. [292] [301] [302] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in 755 554 535 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine 755 554 men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

∞∞ The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 175 291 "The men usually go about stark naked without a stitch on, although their skins are so tanned by the rough weather that they seem to be covered by animal hide or leather, particularly the old men, who are numerous, because the inclemencies of weather do not harm them, they having been used to such rigors since childhood. I saw in Santa Fé the head of a Mocobí Indian, who must have been about 40 years old, the skin of which was more than half a finger thick. The women go about entirely covered, from head to toe, in animal skins, and the principal women attire themselves in cloth made from a pliant plant larger than the agave, which in this province is called "chaguar" and grows wild. From it they make a thread similar to that used by cobblers, and then weave their clothes to which the daughters and wives of the more important men add some black and white ornamentation. From this same fibre they also make jars which, [445] cemented over with wax, can hold water pretty well and also the beverages with which they get drunk.

C M "All the women paint their faces, breasts and arms in the same manner as the moorish women of Africa and Spain, and those ● 302 175 of most consequence do this in intricate patterns which remain in [304] the skin permanently, for their mothers from the day they are born start to fix the dyes in their very flesh with the help of the large sharp bones of certain fish. They also use a dark blue dye, although not to such an extent, on their male children. In addition to this the mothers pluck the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, leaving a completely bald swath three fingers wide running from the forehead to the crown of the head on which the hair never grows again. Thus do the Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies and Aquilotes go about, both men and women, and the latter are extremely ugly as a consequence although, to their thinking, they are very beautiful. And in order that the women pull their hair out, the Devil is wont to appear to them in the form of an Indian woman who comes out of the nearest forest covered with a net and tells them that those who will not allow themselves to be plucked are not to eat fish, for should they do so, they will die. [577] So that if some C M woman, fearing the pain, resists having her hair pulled, she later [262] allows it so as to be able to eat fish which is their favorite food. Others of these Indian nations do not make these pathlike inroads in

C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 72 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
●302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its
222 upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some [262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat [263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of [262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and [756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black, [165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of 302 [765] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

take pains to comb themselves, particularly the women. I remember an occasion when I wished very much to obtain a paddle, made of "palo-fierro" [iron-wood--Translator] and having two blades, the blades ending in long, narrow points. It belonged to an Indian friend of mine who had quite a beautiful wife. I offered him a comb in exchange for the double paddle, but after having considered the matter for a while he refused to make the exchange. His wife seemed to me to be very sorry that the deal had not come off, and she must have made use of all her wiles for on the following day her husband spontaneously came [176] and proposed that we make the exchange. It may be that the reader would have thought better of my being a little more generous, but let it be remembered that if I had given my comb away I would not then have been able to obtain the paddle, which was of more interest to me than the Adamic Indian couple.

What I have said of the Matacos can also be said of the Tobas, with this addition, that the Tobas are taller than the former Indians and generally show a larger expanse of forehead -- I do not know if they are actually broader -- owing to their habit of tying their hair up with a band. This information is true also of the Mocovíes and Chulupíes, all of whom inhabit the Argentine Gran Chaco, to the north of which, in the Bolivian Chaco, live the Chiriguanos and Cirionoses.

Among all these Indians the skin color varies between that of new copper and mud, there being also, here and there, some with blackish markings or blemishes.

Chapter III

Some Ethnic Characteristics

It is customary to say that these Indians are extremely dirty, but I have some very serious doubts in that regard, for I have seen them, in the summer time, run into the river for pleasure's sake at certain fixed hours of the day in great numbers, both men and women, each sex in its own determined place. This would appear to be a custom and not a mere whim. In addition to this they often go into the water to fish. It is true that they seem to be dirty, mostly because of their

On seeing this couple, almost in a state of stark nakedness, seated on a bench among the cylinders and pistons of the engine, motionless for hours, we were necessarily reminded of the earthly paradise.

When among strangers the women are quiet and impassive, but when left to themselves they are full of fun and as playful as children. And this is generally the Indians' character.

The women take up a somewhat strange posture with their hands when they are standing. As they have no pockets to put them in, or fan with which to occupy them, or what have you, they place them upon their breasts which serve as supports for their arms which together rest upon them.

It would seem that such a habit would enlarge the breasts, but this is not so. The breasts are broad, it is true, but short and erect while the women are young. After expertoe virum, and having given suck to one or more children, the breasts shrivel and retract in a very unaesthetic manner, to tell the truth. It is to be noted that both men and women age early there, and also die early, and to this must be attributed the fact that there are few gray hairs even when there are faces and bodies so wrinkled as to make one believe that their owners must be as old as Methuselah.

I have gone into some detail in this matter of the breasts because it is known that in other regions, according to what is said, the women, when they give suck, give the nipple over the shoulder to the child which they are carrying on their backs. The fact is that no such thing occurs here.

The women, along with the men, have abundant, coarse, straight hair. They wear it rather long but not as long as they might, for it is shortened by wearing it in an unkempt fashion (which serves them as protection for eyes and forehead against the sun) and also by cutting.

They cut their hair, that on their faces as well as that on their scalps, with the jaw of a fish called palometa, which is armed with extraordinarily sharp teeth placed in two rows. The upper teeth dovetail exactly with the lower.

The palometa, the raya (ray--Translator) and the yacaré (alligator--Translator) are the scourge of those who bathe in this river and the lakes or pools which are fed by it. The palometa snaps, tears

In places such as these in which women lose their attractions at an early age and in which men are decimated by the constant wars, the custom of polygamy is a social necessity for the tribe which would otherwise run out of members, and a physical necessity for the men and for many women who would otherwise stay single. Nevertheless there are not lacking loose women, free in their favors, for whom the Indians use the name of amoeccue. M 595 M 837

The man is jealous and cruel to his wife if he suspects her of infidelity. While we were visiting the camp of Peilό we had the opportunity of hearing a husband, deep within one of the huts, beat and threaten his wife with death because she had been careless and fallen into the hands of a soldier. Nu-a-ilon-lã (I shall kill you) he ground out between his teeth. On another occasion a woman, after her husband had been absent for two years, took up with another man; the husband returned, lay in wait, ran after and caught his wife and slit her belly open with a knife before the whites could prevent it. This woman did not die and as soon as she was well returned to live with her would-be murderer.

When the Indians intend to get married they dye their cheeks and the region around the eyes red. The man will give his love a present at the time he makes his proposal and if the woman gives [184] an affirmative answer the man gives her a dowry of whatever he has, such as sheep, chickens, skins, etc. M 584 [302]

If the families approve of the union the couple goes to live near one of them, should they not approve then the pair leave the hut and often even leave the camp. Once consent is granted, the nuptial ceremony is the act of consummation.

Among the Chiriguanos, when a man wants to ask for a girl's hand he places a bundle of firewood and a small deer or other provision at her door; if on the following morning the woman lights the fire and prepares a meal with the food supplied, the proposal is considered accepted and the suitor repairs to the table. Some people hold that this is also a Mataco custom, but the facts which I have been able to glean about the matter do not confirm this. C 584

The Chiriguano chiefs, however, have a privilege, which is that they cannot be rejected by the women of their choice: this is a great stroke of luck for them. The chief reveals his inclination with the offering of a piece of meat or some other thing; the girl cooks it, and they then share both meal and bed. The chiefs, especially the C 584 622

although they retain their position of ministers of "foreign affairs," 701
representing the tribe before outsiders either to treat some matter,
or to form an alliance for either war or peace. And even then
their leadership is not of much value for the members of the tribe,
the populace, are free to refuse to go to war -- although actually
their pride only rarely allows them to hold back.

When a chief plans an attack he gets the advice of the old 721
men of the tribe and of other influential persons, and if these do
not set their approval upon his plan he nevertheless invites those
who will to follow him.

Sometimes, though, large scale invasions are planned by
the allied chiefs of several villages. When we arrived at the vil-
lage of Chaguaral, we found there a group of eleven or thirteen
chiefs, all Matacos, who were awaiting the arrival of [194] their
allies with whom, shortly thereafter, they invaded the territory
of other Matacos who three months earlier had given them a good
drubbing.

While they are on their way to wage war they vociferate 726
wildly, shouting both threateningly and happily. They dye part
of their faces and bodies black and sometimes muss up their al- [302] ●
ready unkempt hair until they look like "lost souls," in the opinion
of a Christian Indian. On the eve of battle, those who have the
wherewithal deck their hair, waist and ankles with feathers, pre-
ferring red or yellow ones, and tie any rag they may have with
them tightly about their midriffs. When combat begins they
break out with the most bloodcurdling yells.

This business of putting on warpaint is common to almost 000
all savages: it was the custom also among those whom the Romans
called barbarians; for example, according to Claudius the
Sigambrians used to dye their hair a brilliant red before going into
battle.

The chiefs have the place of honour in the thickest of the 726
battle, which always results in the death of some of them. If the 622
invaders win, they sack everything, capture the women, the 727
children and cattle, parcel out the booty and set fire to the vil-
lage.

They give no quarter to the warriors and only rarely do they 727
spare the lives of the older women because they distrust them as

stemmed from the desire which the whites have of keeping the Indians from settling and taking possession (a fact recognized by Argentine law) of the excellent land which the local whites look upon as legitimate prey for the future.

They do not indulge in commercial enterprises; and how could they possibly do so when they have no agriculture or industries, being only wanderers and nomads? However, they do practice barter on a small scale, which is their only form of primitive, embryonic commerce. They do not have words for "buying and selling," and in order to express this idea it would seem that they had gone to some of school of economics to learn the exchange formula do ut des; for, strangely enough the Matacos, for example, instead of saying "sell me" say atquiocq niquiocq, which means "give me I give you."

One can gather from this that they have no form of money; but they have invented a word to signify our coins, which is tdócq-kynat among the Matacos and which means hide or skin of metal. Kynat is a generic word which covers all metals which do not exist or circulate in the Chaco. It would appear from this that it is a word invented prior to the appearance of paper money.

Nevertheless there is a sort of medium of exchange, though in only an incipient stage, among the inhabitants of the Chaco. It is a substance which the Indians use to paint themselves with and which is highly valued by them even in the smallest amounts. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra the plant which produces it is called urucú. This paint is obtained by boiling the fruit of the urucú for twenty-four hours, when the coloring matter floats to the top and is collected and made into small pellets of varying sizes. The dye is exuded from the skin of the fruit, which is about the size of an orange. The fruit with a blackist skin produces a black dye, the one with yellow skin gives an orange or red dye and the fruit having a white skin produces a green dye. The skin on the yellow and white varieties is about as thick as the outer covering on a walnut. Each one of the three grows on a different kind of urucú, all of which are plants which grow to be about as tall as a man, with fruit about the size of a pomegranate which split open of their own accord when they are ripe.

Although this substance is produced and made in Bolivia, it is current among all the Chaco Indians and is used by them to

dye themselves red when they are courting, black when they wish 302
to appear dreadful, and green when celebrating some festivity. These colors come off very easily.

While on the subject of personal adornment, I must say that 304
these Indians, to a greater or lesser degree, are in the habit of 824
tattooing themselves. I have seen this carried to great lengths among some Toba warriors, and especially among the women. It looks something like the scars left by smallpox and is set out in geometric designs. They do it by puncturing the skin with a [216] large thorn coated with a caustic substance which looks like milk and which leaves an indelible mark and remains under the epidermis. This substance is to be found mainly in Bolivia in the region of Santa Cruz, and is called in Guarani iguoqui. The same name is given to the plant from which it comes which is a vine which produces bunches of white flowers and elongated fruit which break open and expel a sort of dust. In order to obtain iguoqui they cut the bunches before they ripen, and from the stalk there exudes the milky sap used for tattooing. While the operation is in process they keep the portion of stalk submerged in water so that its milky contents will not well out and be lost. A Chiriguano Indian saw one of these vines twenty leagues downstream from the frontier with the whites on the Bermejo River in the place called La Luna Nueva.

A custom very similar in nature to tattooing in its object 302
is the plucking of hair which is a universal activity among the inhabitants of the Chaco and possibly among all the Indians of the New World.

The object of this is to appear better looking, but it is possible that the real cause has something to do with hygiene and comfort.

Maybe they want to set themselves off in this way from the other animals, which are covered with hair.

Meanwhile, either because they are naturally so or because [142]
of a gradual natural selection based on their depilatory habit, the fact is that the Indians are almost completely lacking in hair both on the body and face, and the little which does grow they pull out, with very few exceptions.

In spite of their language's being so complete I have been 533
unable to discover canticles or any similar musical effort. All

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

In subtropical land like the Chaco, where the weather is often very hot especially during the »summer-time», dress is naturally of the most simple kind. Both among the Mataco, the Choroti, and the Tobas, the most important article of the man's clothing is a small cotton waist-cloth which serves as a covering and protection for the genitals. In addition to this waist-cloth the Mataco and the Choroti formerly wore a kind of broad fringed leather-belt round the loins, whereas the Tobas covered the genitals with a small apron of skin or stuff. The rest of the body is among all the tribes generally kept entirely naked or is only covered by the usual necklaces and other ornaments, or by red *urucú*-painting. When the weather is cold, and on festival occasions, the men also wear big woollen blankets with interwoven linear patterns mostly in red colour. The blankets of the Lenguas and other tribes in eastern Chaco often show designs denoting venomous snakes etc., but such patterns are unknown to the Choroti, and where they are found they have originally been obtained from the interior of the country. Weaving is among all Chaco tribes exclusively a work incumbent on the women.

The Choroti man adjusts his blanket in different ways. In cold or wet weather it is wrapped round the body so as to cover one or both shoulders; when it is hot, he allows it to fall in a double fold from his waist, where it is either fastened by a belt or by tucking the folds of one corner into the other.

The usual clothing of the women is a short cotton petticoat reaching from the waist to a little below the knees, the upper part of the body remaining unclothed. This petticoat formerly consisted of deer or nutria skins sewn together, but since the present-day Choroti are poor hunters such skin loin-clothes are now rarely seen. According to Mr. Hunt, young Choroti girls have nowadays adopted the female dress of the Chiriguano (Avas), a kind of sleeveless, waistless gown caught at the shoulders with a couple of safety pins and known under the name of *tipoy*. At the time when I travelled in the Chaco these *tipoys* were only known to the women among the Bolivian Tobas, but not to the Choroti women, who always kept the upper part of their body uncovered and, in opposition to the Toba women, never showed any shame at displaying their bare breasts. A few necklaces, beads, or twisted feathers replace clothing on these nude parts of the body. Many of the personal ornaments of both men and women have the character of amulets or charms and will therefore be dealt with later on in connection with the religion of the natives.

Much the same may be said of the dress of the Mataco and the Tobas. Both of these tribes, and especially the Mataco, have been influenced

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

Choroti SK6

process and the other procreative functions of the woman is realized. The attainment of puberty therefore for the Indian girl certainly means the beginning of her sexual life, but at the same time it means her entrance into a very critical epoch of development, during which she is often — especially at child-birth and during the following menses — exposed to supernatural dangers. Hence the initiation ceremonies at puberty have for their object partly her direct protection against these dangers for the time being, partly her purification once for all from the evils associated with her sexual functions during the years to come or — to express it more plainly — to *harden* her against evil spirits. From this point of view we have to regard all puberty ceremonies of the Indians, even such practices as painting, scarification, and tattooing of the body or face, often undertaken with girls on the attainment of puberty.

In the dances and conjurations performed in honour of girls at puberty it is the women who, contrary to what is generally the rule in religious ceremonies, play the most prominent part. Among the *Choroti* the puberty of girls is celebrated with a magical dance called *Káusima* after the instrument which the women use for it; the instrument is called *káhuis*. The *káhuis* is a dancing-staff, two or three meters in length, made of a light kind of wood or bamboo, which has a bunch of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These rattles produce a hollow sound when the staff is struck on the ground and are supposed to possess a mysterious power to influence the spirits. This power of course must be explained from the fact that to the Choroti the deer is a demoniacal animal. The *káhuis* staff is the only magical instrument used by the Choroti women and it is never handled by the men.

The dance begins at the first new moon after the appearance of the signs of puberty, because the moon is believed to cause and have great influence upon the menstruation of women. It is performed every day until the following new moon, sometimes even still longer. At a *Káusima* dance which I witnessed the arrangement was as follows. The mother of the girl and some other elderly women formed a circle, or rather an elliptic ring, outside the hut where the girl was, each holding her rattling dancing-staff. Close to the ring four medicine-men were sitting at equal distances from one another, holding their rattle gourds (*pelīte*). There were besides two more medicine-men standing up, each provided with a drum. During the dance the women moved round ceremoniously with slow, regular steps, chanting loudly and marking time with their rattle staffs which they struck on the ground. The men outside the ring also chanted, shaking

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 783 827 [224] resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arms fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the idea of the Choroti, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood; and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The same custom is practised by other tribes of the Pilcomayo. Thus C 171 Nordenskiöld noticed it among the Ashluslay, although he did not understand its real meaning. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition, he says, the Indians may be seen to pierce their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes. In both cases the idea evidently is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body and perhaps killed with the pointed instrument.

M 304 783 The scars left by the cuts are tended with care and shown with satisfaction, indeed with pride. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which the *palometa* fishes had inflicted on their body with their sharp teeth when they were bathing in the river. It is clear that according to the idea of the Indians not only the bleeding purges the body from impure matter and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous in regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with European civilization, M 751 783 304 namely, vaccination. I could myself appreciate the extraordinary importance ascribed to scars when during my stay at Esperanza I vaccinated a number of Chaco Indians who were employed as labourers at the sugar factory. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this one, and they therefore as a rule submitted to the vaccine inoculation without remonstration, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remained were regarded with wonder and admiration, and it was perfectly understood that they were a sort of warranty that the terrible disease would not attack the person wearing them.

M 302 789 Of all personal ornaments *body-painting* is the most important. All Chaco tribes practise it, and men and women alike. In the Chaco, as in other parts of South America, body-painting is essentially a custom of magical significance, as one can easily find out by considering the circumstances under which it is practised. The favourite colour of the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

The favourit colour of the
Indians is red or vermilion, the paint being obtained from the seeds of the plant *Bixa orellana*. But this beautiful shrub does not grow in the Gran Chaco. The Chaco tribes only obtain the paint they appreciate so much from the Indians in the north by means of intertribal commerce.

The Chaco Indians are also in the habit of blackening the face with soot or charcoal on certain occasions.

The typical way of painting the face both for men and women is either to colour the whole face and forehead red with *urucú*, or black with charcoal, or only to apply red or black spots, lines, small squares etc. to the cheeks, to the nose, round the mouth and above the eyes. The eye, which is the organ of the most important sense and the one most exposed to disorders, is generally painted with special care. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are only drawn along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled out; sometimes protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, especially by the women. Among the *Tobas*, persons of both sexes generally have the face and forehead painted red. But besides this typical facial painting the Toba women — seldom the men — are in the habit of making special patterns or ornaments upon their cheeks on certain occasions. The patterns used by the Tobas seem to be comparatively few in number; we do not find among them the same abundance of designs as for instance among the Choroti and the Ashluslay. Custom does not require that any special kind of pattern should be applied on a particular occasion. Every woman, for instance for a religious dance or feast, paints upon her face what designs she likes and invents at the moment.

If one asks a Toba girl why she paints her face, she will in most cases simply give the answer that it is considered beautiful, sometimes she will say that it is to please and attract the men. When I asked other people about the matter I was told that the Toba girls paint themselves when they particularly desired a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive for thus decorating the face, for facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, on closer inquiry I found that the Toba women are in the habit of painting themselves *at the time of their menses*, in order to have a protective charm against the evil influences of which they especially then stand in fear. The ideas

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 302 881

the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

M 302 789

Among the *Mataco*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruháh*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *ováittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

M [765]

M [751]

M 301 789

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets,[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

M [756]

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[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich. *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 231.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti, Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsek*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious.

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Nocténes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not »ornaments« in the civilized sense of the word.

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures

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C 765 forming a falling scale in a minor key, which makes a very peculiar impression. At the time of mourning the women and children commence this wailing at fairly regular intervals and all at once, as if it were agreed upon. To one who lives for some time in a Choroti village it is evident C 765 that wailing forms part of Indian etiquette. Not only must the mourners, when they arrive from another village, which has been abandoned on 876 account of a death, be received by a choir of weeping women and children; any guest who arrives in a village shortly after a death has taken place there is received in the same way. When in March 1912 I visited the Choroti in the interior of their land, where no European had yet penetrated, I noticed with astonishment that on my arrival at a village I was received with loud wailing by the women and children. I soon learnt that a great chief had died some time ago; but the fact that the wailing was renewed to receive me remained unexplained. I was told, however, that this peculiar way of receiving strangers was prescribed by Choroti custom. The most probable explanation seems to me that it is feared lest the spirit of the defunct should revisit his people in a strange disguise, and that the wailing has for its object to propitiate him or to frighten him away. Such ideas prevail among other South American tribes also, both in the Chaco and elsewhere.

M C T 765 ● 302 562 There are certain other customs observed in connection with mourning, but they are as a rule limited to the women. Among all Pilcomayo tribes it is customary that when a man dies, his widow, daughters, and sisters cut their hair short with the sharp teeth of the *palometa* fish and burn it. Ceremonial wailing always attends the cutting of the hair. When I asked the Choroti why a widow cuts and destroys her hair after the death of her husband, I was told that the dead husband, who wants his wife to follow him to the grave, is believed to attack her through the hair. In order to rid herself of this danger she shaves it off. Exactly T 765 the same belief prevails among the Tobas: the dead husband or father will seize his surviving wife or daughter by the hair and cause her to fall ill and die. Among the Tobas a widow cuts her hair twice, first immediately after the husband's death, the second time some months later T when the hair has again grown long. At the same time she repeats the [602] wailing. Similarly the nearest female relatives have to diet, in so far as they are not allowed to eat fish for many months. If they infringe the rules of diet in regard to fish they may sicken and die. After a Toba woman has cut her hair the second time she may again eat fish, her mourning is over and she is allowed to marry again. Even some of the

pronounced the same incantation, blew on the dresses which were unfolded and taken away. On the heap of dresses had been placed a gun wrapped in a red belt richly inlaid with shells. One of the dancers seized the gun and slinging it over his shoulder executed a dance bearing a certain likeness to the one he had done before. The dancers were relatives of the sick man, probably his sons.

b) *Treatment of Disease*

A rich woman who was seriously ill was cured by five renowned medicine men. A big open space of about fifteen feet square was cleared not far from her house. Wooden posts were erected and a sort of tent set up. One of the posts, about 20 feet high, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentine flag. Around the tent were placed the objects required by the disease, those which are supposed to please him, a mosquito net, a weaving loom, an old suitcase, pieces of gaudily colored cloth, a saddle, a soldier's coat, a lamp, a lance or a gun. A little further away fires were burning where the disease's food was being prepared and a pail of water was being heated for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a pile of hay and old rags. She had put on her best dress and was covered with ritual ornaments. The five shamans, who were old men, were equally adorned with feather belts, rattles, tropical helmets and other precious objects. The lower part of their faces was painted black.

There were also some twenty dancers wearing feathers, red belts adorned with shells, rattles, caps, red pieces of cloth, whistles and old broken watches, while perhaps ten old women ran about holding rags in their hands and one even held an umbrella. Everybody, including the sick person, danced and sang, at times the medicine-men and the sick woman stopped, they blew on her and the dancing was resumed. After a while the chief medicine-man whistled on

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

stood in the entrance he did not prevent the disease from escaping but he did expose himself to contracting it. 755 535

At a signal from the chief medicine-men, the dancing was interrupted. Two men seized a white and red striped poncho by its extremities and began to dance, making side jumps legs parted. They went to the sick person and put the poncho on her, then they ran with it to the exit and shook it there. They repeated this several times, then they wrapped the woman from head to foot with the poncho and a medicine-man started rubbing her through the cloth, while everybody sang without dancing. After a while the twisted poncho was removed, taken to the exit and thrown away. Then the dance began again. An assistant sprinkled water on the ground and the chief medicine-man stopped the dance once more. He set down near the sick woman, covering himself entirely with a large black blanket and started speaking to the disease. In the meantime, the man who was moistening the ground brought a pail of water and with the assistance of one of the medicine-men he washed the face, head and body of the patient, then she was placed with her feet toward the exit. During the course of the dance, the assistant moistened the shoulders of the male dancers, while an old man painted the women's faces, making two red dots on their cheeks and a stripe along the nose. During this dance a medicine-man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a piece of red cloth. After a while the woman lay down and the dance went on, the paricipants assuming threatening expressions, then suddenly all looked very satisfied. The ceremony was interrupted, then after an hour's time it was resumed. [302]

On the following day another woman was taken sick — but not such a rich one — and another treatment of a more modest character was undertaken. In front of the woman's house a tent was stretched and she was placed in the tent. The offerings consisted only of some pieces of cloth and a few bags. When I arrived the chief medicine-man was speak- 755

wore a red knitted shirt of wool decorated with shells. Many wore on their foreheads frontlets trimmed with feathers. Another ceremonial accessory worn by most of them consisted of a bunch ostrich or *potsax* feathers. Two especially famous medicine-men had their faces painted black and red and on the hat of one of them were ostrich feathers. Naturally among the performers were a number of women, some of whom had their cheeks painted red. In front of the performer's row some spears had been stuck into the ground with the points downward. A spear with the point upward was also stuck in the ground at the same distance away as the others. During the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was fixed to the spear with the head pointed up. When I arrived I noticed in front of the row a young man who was not a magician. He was grinding into a calabash the *hatax* seeds from which the medicine-men later took pinches.

The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical to that sung by the medicine-men when curing diseases. The singing was punctuated by the rattling of the gourds and from time to time by the clacking of hoof and rattle necklaces and the whistling of the flutes. Each blowing of the whistle indicated a new phase in the traditional sequence of events associated with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine-man, its arrival or departure from a given place). The rattle-gourd is sometimes brandished in a theatening manner as though to scare away an invisible being. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, some of the performers took a snuff of *hatax* powder. Those who had bunches of feathers stretched them forward making the same gesture which has already been described when speaking of the rattles. One of the performers was running in front and behind his colleagues, holding a bunch of feathers in his hand and dusting them off from head to foot. He was assisted by another who was holding bells and rattles which he shook behind his companions. After they had taken a snuff of *hatax* the performers went on singing, shak-

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

relatives of the patient) and three dancers. All wore rattles. 755

The medicine-men sang and blew on the patient, who shook the bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in one place and let their rattles jingle. The dancers then started to run from left to right and thus made a complete circle. For the second turn, when they arrived at the height of the sticks, they reversed and ran around in the opposite direction, then reversed again and so on. While the assistants were stamping their feet, singing and shaking their rattles, the medicine-men went on singing and blowing. The patient had not moved during the dance. After they had run around ten times, the dancers went to rest, smoke and talk with the assistants, but the medicine-men still blew and shook their rattles. The patient was still motionless. After a quarter of an hour the dance was resumed, this time to the accompaniment of the patient's bells and rattles which all present were shaking. All seemed to be rather happy. The ceremony was then over and they sat down to smoke. The sticks were removed and the ornaments taken off, first those of the medicine-men, then the assistants and dancers, and finally those of the patient. The patient returned quietly to his hut. 755 535

XV. Sexual Life

Before marriage nothing prevents young people from having a free sexual life. The girls paint their faces red if they have had sexual intercourse the preceding night. 836 302

In love affairs before marriage it is always the women who take the initiative. 836

If a man has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman his loins and head will ache. As for the woman, she is in no danger. 833 841

You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. 834 828

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

that all movement is impossible except to stamp, the spiral begins to unfold itself, first very slowly, then more and more quickly. The dancers are sometimes many. The circle divides into two files which develop simultaneously on both sides of the enclosure.

5. The young men form a file from the center of the dance enclosure to the outer border. Each dancer puts his hand on the shoulder of one neighbor and his other hand on the hip of his other neighbor. The file starts slowly to move; the man in the center whirls himself in a circle and the others follow the movement. The movement is faster toward the outer ends of the file and is accompanied by songs. Sometimes the singing stops but the movement goes on, then the singing starts again.

From time to time the dance is interrupted by a young man following a girl. After they have been running through the dancing place of the village they ordinarily sleep together and on the following day appear with their faces painted red.

According to my informant the dancing songs have no meaning, being mere rhythmic utterances.

XIX. Mourning Rites

A man is buried in the bush in a grave about six feet deep immediately after dying. The dead are buried reclining on their right sides with their faces toward their fields. If they were placed in any other position they could not find the way to their houses and they would become lost. No food is given to the dead except a calabash half filled with water. The soul drinks this water to quench his thirst during his journey to the underworld. All the personal belongings of the deceased are burned and their souls come out to join the soul of their owner. His animals are not killed, but when they die their souls join that of their master.

Immediately after death all grown up members of the deceased, even very remote relatives, begin to weep, ac-

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

764 companying themselves on rattles and drums. These laments last for about one hour after death, then begin again when the corpse is carried away to be buried and finally when they come back from the burial. But on the following day only very near relatives parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, go on weeping. Those who were already mourning for someone else weep louder than the others because they mourn for two.

765 The laments take place at sunrise and at sunset as well as in the middle of the afternoon. During the first days of mourning the near relatives of the deceased go to his home to mourn. There they run and dance, going continually [535] from one place to another and shaking their rattles with both hands. They accompany the dance with lamentations. With the exception of the wife of the deceased, women always mourn in this way, shaking rattles, dancing and lamentations. Mourning women must not appear bareheaded or with a naked face for they ought not to be seen. People [533] sing and play on rattles during the mourning period in order that the dead person may readily be forgotten. The laments which last two or three hours every day are supposed to help the living forget the dead. After six months, more or less, they weep only at dawn and even then very rarely. [302] The relatives of the dead person must cut off their hair in order not to displease the dead who would attack their heads and make them bald. The wife, at the death of her husband, observes mourning for two years. She shuts herself up in a special little hut often adjoining the hut of her married son, or daughter if she has no son.

768 The house of the deceased is pulled down and a new one built about 10 yards away. If this were not done the dead man would come back within fourteen days after death, attracted by memories of his previous life. The materials of the old house are used in the construction of the new one.

A widow may leave her home to satisfy her wants only at night. If she goes out during the day the dead man gets

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithli*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklanik*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
[534] and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies
583 down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence inti-
836 mate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of
[582] sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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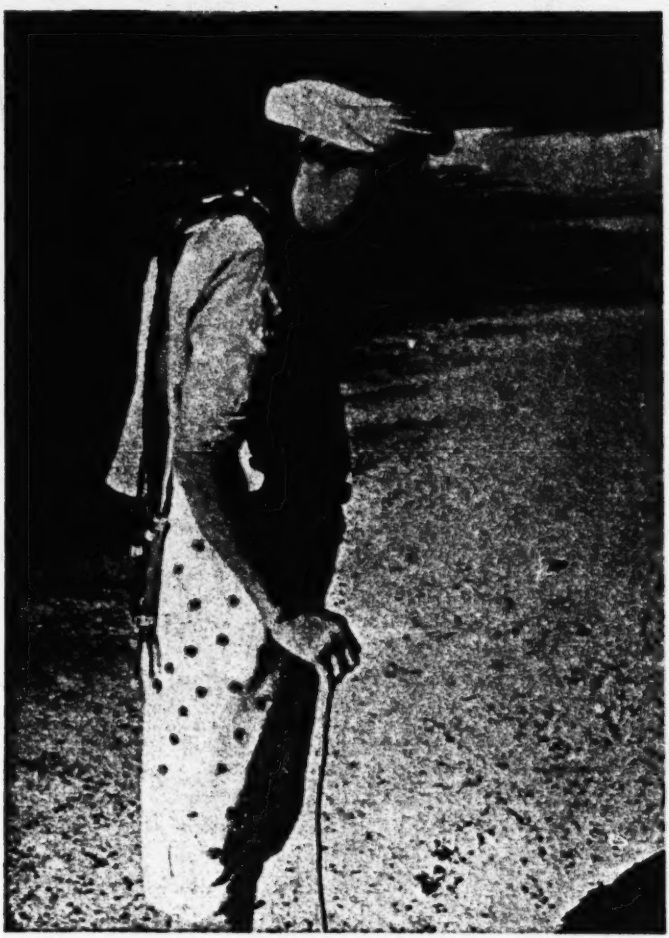

Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *caraguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

[222]
[415]

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and [586] chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints [822] of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [242] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/214 cont./

755 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires
554 were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments.
[292] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing
[301] feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious
[302] objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in
755 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red
554 cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women
535 were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine
755 men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a
554 stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

/216 cont./

[755] [538] they approached the sick woman and passed the poncho over her head; next they ran to the exit and shook it. They repeated this maneuver several times, then completely enveloped the woman in the poncho, and a medicine man began to rub her through the cloth. Everyone was singing but some were not dancing. After some time the poncho was taken off, carried at a running pace to the exit, and thrown outside. The dance was resumed; an assistant threw some water on the ground, and the chief medicine man then stopped the dance again. He sat next to the sick woman, covering himself completely with a large black blanket, and began to speak with the illness; during this time the man who was watering the ground carried up a bucket of water and, with the help of a medicine man, washed the face, head, and body of the sick woman, who was turned with her feet toward the passage made in the crossbars, and a path was traced with water from her feet to the passage. The chief medicine man got up and the dance was resumed with renewed ardor. During this dance the assistant moistened the shoulders [302] of the male dancers, while an old man painted the faces of the women red, giving them two circles on the cheek bones and a streak along the nose. At the same time one medicine man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a red cloth. At the end of a certain time the sick woman lay down, the dance continued, taking on a threatening character, and then suddenly the people appeared satisfied, having undoubtedly obtained a momentary success. The ceremony stopped and was resumed after an hour.

Note

[164] [132] According to the medicine men with whom I had a chance to talk about these two sick women, they were suffering from "sickness in the chest," /217/ easily explicable by a sharp atmospheric drop of almost 25° in 24 hours.

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

∞ The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 175 291 "The men usually go about stark naked without a stitch on, although their skins are so tanned by the rough weather that they seem to be covered by animal hide or leather, particularly the old men, who are numerous, because the inclemencies of weather do not harm them, they having been used to such rigors since childhood. I saw in Santa Fé the head of a Mocobí Indian, who must have been about 40 years old, the skin of which was more than half a finger thick. The women go about entirely covered, from head to toe, in animal skins, and the principal women attire themselves in cloth made from a pliant plant larger than the agave, which in this province is called "chaguar" and grows wild. From it they make a thread similar to that used by cobblers, and then weave their clothes to which the daughters and wives of the more important men add some black and white ornamentation. From this same fibre they also make jars which, C M [445] cemented over with wax, can hold water pretty well and also the beverages with which they get drunk.

"All the women paint their faces, breasts and arms in the C M same manner as the moorish women of Africa and Spain, and those 302 175 of most consequence do this in intricate patterns which remain in ●[304] the skin permanently, for their mothers from the day they are born start to fix the dyes in their very flesh with the help of the large sharp bones of certain fish. They also use a dark blue dye, although not to such an extent, on their male children. In addition to this the mothers pluck the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, leaving a completely bald swath three fingers wide running from the forehead to the crown of the head on which the hair never grows again. Thus do the Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies and Aquilotes go about, both men and women, and the latter are extremely ugly as a consequence although, to their thinking, they are very beautiful. And in order that the women pull their hair out, the Devil is wont to appear to them in the form of an Indian woman who comes out of the nearest forest covered with a net and tells them that those who will not allow themselves to be plucked are not to eat fish, for should they do so, they will die. [577] So that if some C M woman, fearing the pain, resists having her hair pulled, she later [262] allows it so as to be able to eat fish which is their favorite food. Others of these Indian nations do not make these pathlike inroads in

342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
• [304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

dye themselves red when they are courting, black when they wish 302
to appear dreadful, and green when celebrating some festivity.
These colors come off very easily.

While on the subject of personal adornment, I must say that 304 ●
these Indians, to a greater or lesser degree, are in the habit of 824
tattooing themselves. I have seen this carried to great lengths
among some Toba warriors, and especially among the women. It
looks something like the scars left by smallpox and is set out in
geometric designs. They do it by puncturing the skin with a [216]
large thorn coated with a caustic substance which looks like milk
and which leaves an indelible mark and remains under the
epidermis. This substance is to be found mainly in Bolivia in the
region of Santa Cruz, and is called in Guaraní iguoqui. The same
name is given to the plant from which it comes which is a vine
which produces bunches of white flowers and elongated fruit
which break open and expel a sort of dust. In order to obtain
iguoqui they cut the bunches before they ripen, and from the stalk
there exudes the milky sap used for tattooing. While the opera-
tion is in process they keep the portion of stalk submerged in water
so that its milky contents will not well out and be lost. A Chiri-
guano Indian saw one of these vines twenty leagues downstream
from the frontier with the whites on the Bermejo River in the
place called La Luna Nueva.

A custom very similar in nature to tattooing in its object 302
is the plucking of hair which is a universal activity among the
inhabitants of the Chaco and possibly among all the Indians of the
New World.

The object of this is to appear better looking, but it is
possible that the real cause has something to do with hygiene
and comfort.

Maybe they want to set themselves off in this way from the
other animals, which are covered with hair.

Meanwhile, either because they are naturally so or because
of a gradual natural selection based on their depilatory habit, [142]
the fact is that the Indians are almost completely lacking in hair
both on the body and face, and the little which does grow they
pull out, with very few exceptions.

In spite of their language's being so complete I have been 533
unable to discover canticles or any similar musical effort. All

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK6

CHAPTER II.

General characteristics and material culture.

C M 141 142 In their physical characteristics the *Choroti* and the *Mataco* show the same affinity as appears in their languages. Both of them are strongly built and of middle height, the Mataco somewhat taller than the Choroti. The average height of the former seems to be about 163 or 164 cm. for the men and 154 or 155 cm. for the women; of the latter about 162 or 163 cm. for the men and 152 or 153 cm. for the women. In their sturdy appearance the Mataco resemble the mountain Indians, and in former times there has probably been intermarriage between them and the Quichuas. The hair of both tribes is black, coarse and straggling and is worn long by both men and women, except when it is temporarily cut short for ceremonial reasons. The eyes are dark-brown; the nose somewhat flattened, and the features of the face generally irregular, especially among the Mataco. Both tribes know the custom of tattooing the face, the women being always tattooed, the men only in some cases, and never as completely as the women.

M [174]

C M [304]

T 142 114 I need not dwell upon the physical characteristics of the *Tobas* since they have been described by nearly all authors ever since Lozano. They certainly form an easily recognisable type of Indian, differing considerably from the rest of the Chaco tribes, one salient feature being their remarkably tall and strong build of body. The Tobas are in fact among the tallest of all South American Indians, being in this respect comparable with the ancient Patagonians, to whom they were probably related, as well as with the present Ona Indians of the mainland of Tierra del Fuego. The physical anthropology of the Tobas, just as that of the Mataco and the Choroti, has been studied scientifically by the German anthropologist Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche.[1])

[1]) Lehmann-Nitsche, R. *Estudios antropológicos sobre los Chiriguanos, Chorotes, Matacos y Tobas* (*Anales del Museo de La Plata*. Buenos Aires, 1908).

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

process and the other procreative functions of the woman is realized. The attainment of puberty therefore for the Indian girl certainly means the beginning of her sexual life, but at the same time it means her entrance into a very critical epoch of development, during which she is often — especially at child-birth and during the following menses — exposed to supernatural dangers. Hence the initiation ceremonies at puberty have for their object partly her direct protection against these dangers for the time being, partly her purification once for all from the evils associated with her sexual functions during the years to come or — to express it more plainly — to *harden* her against evil spirits. From this point of view we have to regard all puberty ceremonies of the Indians, even such practices as painting, scarification, and tattooing of the body or face, often undertaken with girls on the attainment of puberty.

In the dances and conjurations performed in honour of girls at puberty it is the women who, contrary to what is generally the rule in religious ceremonies, play the most prominent part. Among the *Choroti* the puberty of girls is celebrated with a magical dance called *Káusima* after the instrument which the women use for it; the instrument is called *káhuis*. The *káhuis* is a dancing-staff, two or three meters in length, made of a light kind of wood or bamboo, which has a bunch of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These rattles produce a hollow sound when the staff is struck on the ground and are supposed to possess a mysterious power to influence the spirits. This power of course must be explained from the fact that to the Choroti the deer is a demoniacal animal. The *káhuis* staff is the only magical instrument used by the Choroti women and it is never handled by the men.

The dance begins at the first new moon after the appearance of the signs of puberty, because the moon is believed to cause and have great influence upon the menstruation of women. It is performed every day until the following new moon, sometimes even still longer. At a *Káusima* dance which I witnessed the arrangement was as follows. The mother of the girl and some other elderly women formed a circle, or rather an elliptic ring, outside the hut where the girl was, each holding her rattling dancing-staff. Close to the ring four medicine-men were sitting at equal distances from one another, holding their rattle gourds (*pelíte*). There were besides two more medicine-men standing up, each provided with a drum. During the dance the women moved round ceremoniously with slow, regular steps, chanting loudly and marking time with their rattle staffs which they struck on the ground. The men outside the ring also chanted, shaking

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter.

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aittáh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men.

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*.

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat.

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *M a t a c o* and the *C h o r o t i* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause

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M 304 inflammation in the face the girl has to fast for some days after the operation.

M 304 751 Tattooing has a purely magical significance, as may be inferred from the fact that the Mataco and the Choroti women regard it particularly as a protection against disease. Analyzing the custom, we can distinguish at least three factors in it, all of which are associated with magical ideas: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes) rubbed into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised which remain when the wounds have healed. Bleeding and scarification are common practices of purely magical significance among all Indians of South America, and as far as the Pilcomayo tribes are concerned I shall have occasion to mention this custom again in a later chapter. The very scars left after such operations are regarded as a protection against evil spirits. Further, that tattooing is done by means of ashes or soot is certainly not an accident. The use of ashes for superstitious purposes is of frequent occurrence among the Indians, the general idea being that ashes are a prophylactic against evil spirits. The custom of mixing ashes or soot with saliva is significant from the same point of view, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed to the saliva.

M [789]

M [827]

C 304 751 789 All women among the Choroti are tattooed in the same way, that is, have the same marks and patterns applied to the face, and no full-grown woman lacks this tribal characteristic. Since tattooing is regarded as a permanent protection against evil spirits and sickness, it is natural that a woman lacking it should be shunned by the men, but it is not a means of attraction or a »decoration» in the common sense of the word.

T 304 184 [362] As to the *T o b a s*, tattooing or the custom of making indelible marks on the body or the face was formerly in vogue among all Toba tribes as among all peoples of the Guaycurú-group; but the Bolivian Tobas of the present day have dropped this custom, contenting themselves with simple body painting. Tattooing among the Tobas seems to have been limited to the female sex, as indeed is the rule among the Chaco tribes. According to d'Orbigny, the Toba girls were tattooed when they attained puberty and became marriageable. Since the custom is no longer practised by the Bolivian Tobas I have not seen how it is done by them. The procedure, however, is the same as among other Chaco tribes, incisions being made in the face and ashes rubbed into the wounds. As appears from the photographs of some Toba women which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche took in Buenos Aires in 1899 the tattooing practised by the Toba women was exceedingly elaborate and complicated.

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The custom of tattooing, as it was practised by the ancient Guaycurú is described by Father Dobrizhoffer in much the following way. The Abiponian women, says the Father, [1]) not content with the marks common to both sexes, have their face, breast, and arms covered with black figures of various shapes, so that they present the appearance of a Turkish carpet. As soon as a young woman is of age to be married, she is ordered to be marked according to custom. She reclines her head upon the lap of an old woman and is pricked. Thorns are used for a pencil, and ashes mixed with blood for paint. The old woman, sticking the points of the thorns deep into the flesh, describes various figures till the whole face streams with blood. The first day she is sent home with her face half pricked with the thorns, and is recalled the next and the next after that, to have the rest of her face, the breast, and the arms pricked in like manner. Meantime she is shut up for several days in her father's tent and wrapped in a hide that she may receive no injury from the cold air. Carefully abstaining from meat, fish, and some other sorts of food, she feeds upon nothing but a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood. [2])

From Dobrizhoffer's account it appears that tattooing was practised by the ancient Guaycurú in the same way as by the present-day Chaco tribes.

Among the puberty customs we may also, in a certain sense, reckon the perforation of the ear-lobes for the insertion of wooden plugs or tubes. The perforation takes place even before the age of puberty, when the boy or girl is five or six years old, but the wooden ornaments are inserted later and are a sign that the boy or girl in question is regarded as a man or woman. The ear-lobe is pierced with a cactus thorn by an old woman, a grass or small wooden pin being inserted so as to prevent the wound from closing. Later on bigger and bigger pins are inserted, by which the holes are more and more extended, and lastly the plug or tube, which forms one of the most prominent ornaments of the Indians. The wooden plugs which the Tobas formerly wore in their ear-lobes, were so thick and heavy that they hung nearly down to the shoulders. In our own days they are only used by the Argentine Pilága, not by the Bolivian Tobas. It is to be observed that although the ear-lobes of both sexes are perforated, the ear-plugs or tubes are among the Choroti, Mataco, and Ashluslay worn chiefly by men, seldom by women, whereas among the Tobas *only* men wear them. These ornaments seem to have chiefly a magical significance.

[1]) Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, II. 20 sq.

[2]) This fruit is evidently the tasi fruit mentioned above, which thus is still eaten by the Toba women when they have to observe ceremonial fasting.

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C 783 827 [324] resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arms fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the idea of the Choroti, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood; and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The same custom is practised by other tribes of the Pilcomayo. Thus C 171 Nordenskiöld noticed it among the Ashluslay, although he did not understand its real meaning. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition, he says, the Indians may be seen to pierce their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes. In both cases the idea evidently is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body and perhaps killed with the pointed instrument.

M ● 304 783 The scars left by the cuts are tended with care and shown with satisfaction, indeed with pride. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which the *palometa* fishes had inflicted on their body with their sharp teeth when they were bathing in the river. It is clear that according to the idea of the Indians not only the bleeding purges the body from impure matter and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous in regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with European civilization, M 751 783 304 namely, vaccination. I could myself appreciate the extraordinary importance ascribed to scars when during my stay at Esperanza I vaccinated a number of Chaco Indians who were employed as labourers at the sugar factory. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this one, and they therefore as a rule submitted to the vaccine inoculation without remonstration, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remained were regarded with wonder and admiration, and it was perfectly understood that they were a sort of warranty that the terrible disease would not attack the person wearing them.

M 302 784 Of all personal ornaments *body-painting* is the most important. All Chaco tribes practise it, and men and women alike. In the Chaco, as in other parts of South America, body-painting is essentially a custom of magical significance, as one can easily find out by considering the circumstances under which it is practised. The favourite colour of the

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1. 2. 3. 4. 5 = Women's body-painting for different occasions (at menstruation etc.). 6 = Ornamental body-painting after a death. 7 = Body-painting (with charcoal) after a death (women's). 8 = War painting of the Tobas (face black with charcoal, breast and arms red with urucu).

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithli*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklandi*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
548 self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
534 and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence
583 intimate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
836 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of
[582] sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable, we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourliea decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sisyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called »summer» in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and "hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usually at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; gúu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something. for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lúték; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-'hi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets M [415] which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's M [531] opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M 396 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M ● 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 313 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

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Fig. 66. A. Mataco-Vejos woman impressing a finger-print ornament on the rim of an earthenware vessel.

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
533 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

● 342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

skin color, and also because of the scratches which become caked, and 515
because of the sun's burning which wrinkles the almost scorched skin, especially on their shoulders; and finally because they go about barefoot and naked in the mud, through the underbrush and bushes, and as they lie down on the bare earth it is only natural that they should be covered with dust, just as we, who wash a thousand times a day do a thousand times become dirty again. They are not -- pardon the expression -- grubby, and I firmly contend that they are not dirty by nature.

An Indian camp is composed of an undetermined number of 342 ●
dwellings, made by sticking branches into the ground and tying them [361]
together on top in the form of a cupola. Onto this frame they throw quantities of straw until it looks like, not a hut, but a wagon so loaded with hay as to cover the very wheels.

They hurl the straw from quite some distance and yet so accurately as to cause wonder, so much the more as it is the women who do this work. A hut, once finished, is so strongly constructed that a man can stand and move about upon it, and it is quite waterproof.

[177] Each chief has his own group of huts, like so many barracks, and sometimes, especially on the occasion of a declaration of war, [622]
many chiefs gather.

The huts are usually so low-ceilinged that one cannot stand up inside, but they vary as to length according to the rank of the family and the number of families which live in them. The long huts are somewhat humped, with two or more doors. The entrance ways are usually protected, on the windy side of the hut, by a fixed windbreak -- one must stoop in order to be able to enter.

A hut is divided into the following parts: the kitchens and the sections where sleeping, sitting, working etc. is carried on; however, there is no material separation between these parts.

The kitchen is nothing more than a swept space on which a fire [354]
is lighted, but only when the weather is cold or when the family mother [765]
is in mourning, during which time she does not leave the hut for a year, or allow herself to be seen, nor does she speak except when strictly necessary. The usual thing is to cook food outside near the entrance. There are as many kitchens as there are families.

The bedroom consists of that portion of the hut where they 352
place skins and clothes, if they have any, upon which they lie and which they put on when they go out if it is cold. On the walls at the

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

by the whites even in their dress, but those sub-tribes who still live in a state of nature keep the body almost wholly uncovered or only wear clothes consisting of animals' skins or cotton or woollen waist-clothes and mantles of their own make, just as is the case with the Choroti. The Catholic missionary Cardús, who visited the Tobas about fifty years ago, relates that the majority of the men used to go entirely naked, only wearing a small apron of skin or stuff. When they went out hunting or to battle they wore a jacket or a breast-plate of tiger's skin. Although nowadays the Tobas commonly use articles of clothing obtained from the whites, they are still frequently seen to go almost naked, only wearing a small waist-cloth, especially when the weather is hot or when they are working. The women, according to the same writer, used to have a small apron of fox, deer, or tiger's skin tied at the waist, which reached down to the knees. The hairy side of the skin was turned inwards and the outside was painted in different colours and figures. Nowadays, as I have already mentioned, the dress of the Toba and the Mataco women in Bolivia is the *t'ipoy*, a sort of long gown or shirt made of red or some other brightly coloured stuff which covers the whole body leaving only the arms bare.

Both the Choroti and the Mataco men on certain occasions wear a kind of coarse shirt made of the fibres of the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). These shirts are mainly worn as a protection for the body against the thorny bushes when wandering in the forests, but also as armour in battle, since the arrows of the enemy are supposed not to penetrate these thick shirts. As a protection for the feet again the men, when hunting in the forest, sometimes wear a sort of sandal or leggings roughly made of deer or tapir hide. The head is always kept uncovered by the Chaco tribes or is only covered by ostrich plumes and the purely ornamental headgear which forms part and parcel of festive attire.

The houses of the Pilcomayo tribes are all of the same exceedingly primitive construction, or at any rate have originally been of the same type. They are round, conical, or beehive-shaped huts, constructed by a number of boughs of trees fixed in the ground in a circle and tied together at the upper ends. This erection is covered with rushes, grass, and palm-leaves down to the ground so as to form a rough thatch. A small opening is left for an entrance or door, which is so narrow that the inhabitants are obliged to enter the hut on all fours. The whole hut, varying from six to ten feet high in the centre, is too low to allow a man to stand erect, and the grass thatch so loose that the abode offers only a poor shelter

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

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against rain and wind. In these huts the Chaco Indian spends most of his time, sitting or lying on the ground or on the goat or sheep skin which forms his most important personal property. In the daytime, however, if the weather is fine, he prefers to stay outside the house engaged in various occupations or in eating or drinking, and in the summer time when no rain is falling and the temperature is high, he frequently even passes the night in the open air.

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Whereas primitive huts of this type are still customary among the Pilagá and other Argentine Tobas as well as among distant Mataco tribes, the Mataco and Tobas on the Bolivian side nowadays make houses of the same form as the whites, constructed of beams or balks with walls of cane and roofs of twigs and grass. Still these houses are so badly built that it is no rare thing to see a passing whirlwind sweep off the roofs and damage the walls.

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A Choroti or a Mataco village consists of six to twelve huts, generally arranged in a circle round an open space which serves as a field for games and as a tethering place for the small flocks of sheep and goats possessed by the Indians. In the middle of this space there is usually a shady algaroba tree under which the men of the village assemble for deliberations and where the drinking-bouts take place. In building their settlements the Indians first of all make sure of the existence of water in the neighbourhood, be it the river Pilcomayo itself or one of those insignificant pools which are found here and there in the interior of the Chaco; secondly, the place must offer the necessary pasture for their flocks; and thirdly, the Indians always settle in the vicinity of a forest where they can find plenty of the wild fruits on which they to a great extent subsist, and the trees of which offer some protection against the burning rays of the sun during the hottest hours of the day. Further, being anti-social and shy, the Indians preferably chose for their settlements a place hidden away from the main track. Seldom or never are they found close to the banks of a river: generally one has to travel one or a few miles into the interior to find their villages.

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The villages of the Tobas and the Ashluslay are generally larger than those of the Choroti and the Mataco because the tribes are larger, but they are arranged on the same principles. All Chaco tribes live in village communities — this is a feature which differentiates these tribes from those of the tropical virgin forests. The vast pampas regions, of course, favour the rise of larger societies, whereas in the great virgin forests the different families necessarily live scattered.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

which the strangers are believed to bring with them. The whole place, according to the idea of the Indians, has become infected as it were by the new-comers. Besides, the Indians understand that one party of white men is soon followed by another.

It is natural that the Chaco Indians should not care to bestow great labour on dwellings which in all probability will house them only for a short time, or in general, to arrange their life more comfortably in a place which they will probably soon be obliged to desert for ever. Apart from this, the Chaco Indian, who is perfectly suited to his environment, constructs his houses precisely in the way he thinks is most practical and of the material which is most easily obtainable. In the interior parts of the Chaco there are no large trees affording material for the construction of more substantial and durable houses. On the other hand, the scraggy trees and bushes in which the Chaco forests abound and the grassy plains provide building material in abundance, always within reach and excellent for the needs of the Indians. The beehive shaped huts of the primitive Chaco tribes therefore do not, as a certain ethnological school asserts, represent a type of human dwelling essentially characteristic of tribes at the lowest stages of cultural development, but must be wholly explained by the natural conditions. Like the Fuegians, who in their general culture are closely related to the Chaco-tribes, the latter are not, on the whole, any lower in the scale of human development than most other tribes in tropical or sub-tropical South America, although nature may allow these to construct habitations of a higher type.

The same reasoning evidently accounts for the fact that the Pilcomayo tribes, although they are dependent on the river and to a great extent subsist by fishing, do not use canoes or craft of any kind. Whereas »dug-outs» of the kind customary among the South American Indians are commonly used by the Lenguas and other tribes of the river Paraguay, the Choroti, Mataco, Tobas, and Ashluslay have not even thought of constructing such vessels, obviously because the large timber trees from which canoes could be dug out are not obtainable in their country.

I have mentioned that agriculture is only practised by the Chaco tribes on a very limited scale, which of course is due to the dryness of the climate. Among all tribes the land is common property, and within this territory each family has a small plot of land allotted to it, or once taken possession of, which they are supposed to possess as long as they actually cultivate it. Pumpkin, *santia* (water melon), and beans are the principal crops of the Choroti; maize and manioc are also cultivated, but the drought

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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A settlement of Mataco Indians. Mataco-Noctenes. Bolivia.

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A Mataco Indian dressed in a caraguata shirt.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilocality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

in making aloja. The chañar ripens before the other two mentioned above and is a sweetish, round, rather small yellow fruit with a stone, which is eaten either raw or cooked. From this fruit arrope is made, which is good tasting and has, in local opinion, medicinal qualities for the treatment of coughs and asthma. The chañar tree, while it is young, has leaves and trunk similar to the tamarind; the branches look like those of the eucalyptus. 824

Shortly after the algarrobo pods comes the mistol which is similar to our azufaifo except for this difference: from a mixture of its fruits with algarrobo pod flower, patay is made, and kept in skins and well kneaded. Together with these fruits, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later, all the other fruits ripen -- in the Chaco in the hottest months which are October and December (spring and summer months) and further south, towards Tucumán, in November and February.

Through certain techniques of preservation the Indians are able to prolong the yearly period during which they can feed on this vegetable diet, particularly if the crop has been a good one. The harvest lasts between four and five months and is a time of carnival for the Indians [189]. 251

To preserve the algarrobo pods they build small huts which they place on four posts in order to supply them with proper ventilation and to keep them free of ants and other insects. It is a pleasure to see these little constructions rising above the Indians' huts in the same manner as do our towers. Each camp takes pleasure in having more of these little granaries than do its neighbors. In the same manner do they keep vinal and some roots and fruits which can and should be cooked when dry. 343●

When the aloja is ready, which is usually at eleven in the morning, all the men gather about the yuchan container, seated in the Moorish fashion. Then, with two or three long-handled dry gourds they dip out the liquid and pass it around to each other. Meanwhile they talk about their affairs: about wars, the crops, news, odd bits of scandal, and guffaw at any strange happening or quid pro quo. Thus they continue for three, four or more hours. When the liquor is finished they fall upon the solid matter remaining. The women and children take no part in any of this. 273 [521]

They set a high value on the algarrobo pod. A famous chief, whom the whites called Granadero (Grenadier guard -- Translator) 824

/214 cont./

755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was [533] resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the [535] rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[774] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the [776] images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

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(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

skin color, and also because of the scratches which become caked, and 515
because of the sun's burning which wrinkles the almost scorched skin, especially on their shoulders; and finally because they go about barefoot and naked in the mud, through the underbrush and bushes, and as they lie down on the bare earth it is only natural that they should be covered with dust, just as we, who wash a thousand times a day do a thousand times become dirty again. They are not -- pardon the expression -- grubby, and I firmly contend that they are not dirty by nature.

An Indian camp is composed of an undetermined number of 342 [361]
dwellings, made by sticking branches into the ground and tying them together on top in the form of a cupola. Onto this frame they throw quantities of straw until it looks like, not a hut, but a wagon so loaded with hay as to cover the very wheels.

They hurl the straw from quite some distance and yet so accurately as to cause wonder, so much the more as it is the women who do this work. A hut, once finished, is so strongly constructed that a man can stand and move about upon it, and it is quite waterproof.

[177] Each chief has his own group of huts, like so many barracks, [622]
and sometimes, especially on the occasion of a declaration of war, many chiefs gather.

The huts are usually so low-ceilinged that one cannot stand up inside, but they vary as to length according to the rank of the family and the number of families which live in them. The long huts are somewhat humped, with two or more doors. The entrance ways are usually protected, on the windy side of the hut, by a fixed windbreak -- one must stoop in order to be able to enter.

A hut is divided into the following parts: the kitchens and the sections where sleeping, sitting, working etc. is carried on; however, there is no material separation between these parts.

The kitchen is nothing more than a swept space on which a fire [354]
is lighted, but only when the weather is cold or when the family mother is in mourning, during which time she does not leave the hut for a year, [765]
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The bedroom consists of that portion of the hut where they 352●
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head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and "hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usually at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the

skin color, and also because of the scratches which become caked, and 515
because of the sun's burning which wrinkles the almost scorched skin, especially on their shoulders; and finally because they go about barefoot and naked in the mud, through the underbrush and bushes, and as they lie down on the bare earth it is only natural that they should be covered with dust, just as we, who wash a thousand times a day do a thousand times become dirty again. They are not -- pardon the expression -- grubby, and I firmly contend that they are not dirty by nature.

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342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
● 361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

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It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the 252
very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild 262
fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are 323
made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usu- 264
ally at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out [252]
and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the 262

137

used industrially, the yuchan and the cháguar (which has fiber serviceable in making rope) [192] as they are to be found over an enormous territory and grow without need of cultivation, would be of great commercial value.

Another interesting tree that has domestic use and may some day be employed industrially is the pacara (Enterolobium timboiva). It is a tree of great beauty, very tall, of large girth and having a great deal of foliage -- it is of the mimosa family. Its fruit is a flat, oblong, twisted pod of a dark chestnut color about an inch and a half long and which contains 12 percent to 15 percent of saponin. This pod is used [388] to get the grease out of clothes and wool.

To finish as we had started, I must add that the Indians are great 273 lovers of the alcoholic beverages common among the whites, and become so drunk as to be floored. Even in this detail are they like those who are not their brothers in Christ.

Chapter VII

Wars

The Indians are much addicted to wars, it must be confessed, 721 and they are perpetually fighting; it is -- if I may be allowed the expression -- a continual giving and taking.

One war follows another, either because the vanquished wish to avenge their previous losses or because the victors have begun to enjoy their victories. Causes for war are: having fished, hunted or harvested in foreign territory, or the need to annul an offence or the hope of gain.

These wars are not strategic ones in which one battle follows another until the enemy is helpless to defend himself; rather are they surprise attacks on camps with the object of overwhelming and pillaging them and carrying off cattle, boys and sometimes even women.

This is why the camps or villages, in forested regions, always 361 ● have flanks and back right up against the deep woods, where, if surprised, the inhabitants may find refuge, and where it would be impossible to pursue them as there is a veritable labyrinth of paths known only to the inhabitants of the village.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

114 The way which leads from Embarcación up to Bolivia is what is called a *camino carretero*, a broad road suitable for big carts drawn by mules. It is illustrative of the primitive means of communication in Bolivia that nearly all articles of commerce had to be transported along this road up to such distant places as Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Mojos in the heart of Bolivia — a journey which takes months to accomplish. My own nearest goal was a place called Yacuiba, a big village which at that time belonged to Bolivia, but a few years later on was annexed by Argentine. The journey from Embarcación to Yacuiba takes seven days. Embarcación is situated on the bank of the Rio Bermejo, a tributary of the Pilcomayo, and this river had to be crossed, the mules swimming over it. Having a few hours later passed the small village Miraflores, we arrived at the open plains varied with small forests which here form the westernmost part of the enormous territory of the Gran Chaco. These regions are almost uninhabited; only isolated *tolderias* (villages) of the Mataco Indians are found, from which occasionally we could hear the beating of drums or the incantations of the medicine-men, when they were trying to call forth rain or to drive away evil disease-bringing spirits. The scarcity of water in fact was great, for although it was the beginning of the rainy season, very little rain had as yet fallen, and at the halting-places it was generally difficult to find water for the beasts. In a place called Bomba, inhabited by a lonely settler, we had to pay for the drinking-water, which was brought from a distant pool near the cordilleras rising in the west.

114 361

About midway between Embarcación and Yacuiba lies the village Tartagal, which at that time only consisted of a couple of poor houses. In this region nature entirely changes its aspect. The traveller, having previously marched for days through open plains and thickets, suddenly enters a virgin forest of almost tropical grandeur, where the great variety of climbers and creepers, covering not only the giant trees but also bushes and plants, especially attracts attention. This is a type of scenery which is only met with in the vicinity of the Andes, never in the interior of the Chaco. We had to march a couple of days through this interesting primeval forest before we again came out on the plains. Just north of Tartagal there is the small village Aguaray — like all villages in this region, rather a group of primitive ranches — whence it is only one day's journey to Yacuiba.

114 133

Yacuiba was formerly a place of bad repute, being a resort of criminals and adventurers of the kind so frequently met with in places far away from the centres of civilization in Argentine and Bolivia. At the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

M 342 against rain and wind. In these huts the Chaco Indian spends most of his time, sitting or lying on the ground or on the goat or sheep skin which forms his most important personal property. In the daytime, however, if the weather is fine, he prefers to stay outside the house engaged in various occupations or in eating or drinking, and in the summer time when no rain is falling and the temperature is high, he frequently even passes the night in the open air.

M T 342 177 Whereas primitive huts of this type are still customary among the Pilagá and other Argentine Tobas as well as among distant Mataco tribes, the Mataco and Tobas on the Bolivian side nowadays make houses of the same form as the whites, constructed of beams or balks with walls of cane and roofs of twigs and grass. Still these houses are so badly built that it is no rare thing to see a passing whirlwind sweep off the roofs and damage the walls.

C ●M ●361 A Choroti or a Mataco village consists of six to twelve huts, generally arranged in a circle round an open space which serves as a field for games and as a tethering place for the small flocks of sheep and goats possessed by the Indians. In the middle of this space there is usually a shady algaroba tree under which the men of the village assemble for deliberations and where the drinking-bouts take place. In building their settlements the Indians first of all make sure of the existence of water in the neighbourhood, be it the river Pilcomayo itself or one of those insignificant pools which are found here and there in the interior of the Chaco; secondly, the place must offer the necessary pasture for their flocks; and thirdly, the Indians always settle in the vicinity of a forest where they can find plenty of the wild fruits on which they to a great extent subsist, and the trees of which offer some protection against the burning rays of the sun during the hottest hours of the day. Further, being anti-social and shy, the Indians preferably chose for their settlements a place hidden away from the main track. Seldom or never are they found close to the banks of a river: generally one has to travel one or a few miles into the interior to find their villages.

C M T 361 The villages of the Tobas and the Ashluslay are generally larger than those of the Choroti and the Mataco because the tribes are larger, but they are arranged on the same principles. All Chaco tribes live in village communities — this is a feature which differentiates these tribes from those of the tropical virgin forests. The vast pampas regions, of course, favour the rise of larger societies, whereas in the great virgin forests the different families necessarily live scattered.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

361 181 In Chaco, both the primitive methods of constructing the houses and the peculiar character of the social life must to a great deal be explained by the fact that the Chaco Indians are nomads, unable to remain long in any one place and driven by resistless forces from one part of the country to another. Both their enemies, partly other Indian tribes, partly men of an altogether different race, and nature itself have always compelled them to live a nomadic life. It is a well known fact that the interior of the Chaco has for many centuries been a place of refuge for savage tribes driven to these inhospitable regions against their own will, under the pressure of superior forces. Still more do natural conditions force the Indians to wander: vast inundations at certain seasons, complete lack of water at others, and a variety of considerations arising from the necessity of obtaining a livelihood. When pasture or game is getting scarce in one place, the Indans change their abode and move to another place where it is easier to feed their flocks and to eke out their store of food by hunting. Agriculture, although practised to a very limited extent, may also at times compel the Chaco Indians to seek new dwelling-places. But — as Mr. Grubb rightly observes with special reference to the Lenguas of Paraguay — the Chaco Indian is often driven to forsake home and friends merely by his restless spirit, »the result of generations of hard and peculiar circumstances fixing a habit upon him which becomes second nature». The mere desire to wander and to get a change, or perhaps to see relatives and friends living in another part of the country, may induce an Indian to abandon his house and to move away with his wife and children and his whole property. Superstition works in the same direction. When a death occurs in a house, that house is as a general rule destroyed and burnt, and if an epidemic causes several deaths within a short time, the whole village is destroyed and thereafter abandoned by its inhabitants. The Indians cannot persuade themselves to continue living in a place which is evidently haunted by evil spirits.

361 648 Distant savage Chaco tribes have been in the habit of abandoning and destroying their villages after they have been visited by white men. In some cases the Indians, as soon as they have got to know through their spies that a party of white men are approaching, have burnt their villages and retired to the interior, unexplored parts of the country. Both Nordenskiöld and other travellers have noted with astonishment this custom of the Chaco tribes. Its true motives are to be sought partly in a natural fear of the whites, of whom the Indians have frequently had sad experience, but above all in superstitious dread of the mysterious disease-spirits

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

which the strangers are believed to bring with them. The whole place, according to the idea of the Indians, has become infected as it were by the new-comers. Besides, the Indians understand that one party of white men is soon followed by another.

It is natural that the Chaco Indians should not care to bestow great labour on dwellings which in all probability will house them only for a short time, or in general, to arrange their life more comfortably in a place which they will probably soon be obliged to desert for ever. Apart from this, the Chaco Indian, who is perfectly suited to his environment, constructs his houses precisely in the way he thinks is most practical and of the material which is most easily obtainable. In the interior parts of the Chaco there are no large trees affording material for the construction of more substantial and durable houses. On the other hand, the scraggy trees and bushes in which the Chaco forests abound and the grassy plains provide building material in abundance, always within reach and excellent for the needs of the Indians. The beehive shaped huts of the primitive Chaco tribes therefore do not, as a certain ethnological school asserts, represent a type of human dwelling essentially characteristic of tribes at the lowest stages of cultural development, but must be wholly explained by the natural conditions. Like the Fuegians, who in their general culture are closely related to the Chaco tribes, the latter are not, on the whole, any lower in the scale of human development than most other tribes in tropical or sub-tropical South America, although nature may allow these to construct habitations of a higher type.

The same reasoning evidently accounts for the fact that the Pilcomayo tribes, although they are dependent on the river and to a great extent subsist by fishing, do not use canoes or craft of any kind. Whereas »dug-outs» of the kind customary among the South American Indians are commonly used by the Lenguas and other tribes of the river Paraguay, the Choroti, Mataco, Tobas, and Ashluslay have not even thought of constructing such vessels, obviously because the large timber trees from which canoes could be dug out are not obtainable in their country.

I have mentioned that agriculture is only practised by the Chaco tribes on a very limited scale, which of course is due to the dryness of the climate. Among all tribes the land is common property, and within this territory each family has a small plot of land allotted to it, or once taken possession of, which they are supposed to possess as long as they actually cultivate it. Pumpkin, *santia* (water melon), and beans are the principal crops of the Choroti; maize and manioc are also cultivated, but the drought

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *alaje* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *asutshe;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6
Tapiete SK13

/1 cont./

000 the Sociedad Cientifica del Paraguay. Having also visited
C the Churupí Indians at the mission near Lake Escalante, about
A 25 kilometers from the mission at Esteros, I continued my
M journey on September 5 as far as Linares, where I found a num-
114 ber of Mataco Indians, who in part lived in a town some seven
M kilometers from Linares and in part had come from the other
[361] side of the Pilcomayo River to Linares.

/2/ On September 9 I left Linares and on the next day
C arrived in Guachalla, from where I visited the Churupí camp
A /tolderia/ about seven kilometers away.
114
[361]

On September 11 I left Guachalla for the fort of Cururenda,
C where I had the occasion to see the Chorote /Choroti/ Indians,
CI who were living in a camp some three kilometers from
114 Cururenda, as well as some Toba and Mataco, who came
CI from the other side of the Pilcomayo to Cururenda.
[361]

On September 15 I continued my journey as far as Oruro,
C in the environs of which I visited the Tapieté. My escort,
114 Lieutenant Cabello, who knew these Indians well, took me to
T their two camps, one of which is 15 and the other 32 kilo-
[361] meters from Oruro.

On September 19 I left Oruro, and passing through
C Capirendá and Carandayty, in the company of Lieutenant
114 Díego Corvalan, I arrived in Machareti, where I remained
from September 21-25. Since Machareti is a Chiriguano
town, I had a good chance at this place and at the end of my
journey, to observe this interesting Indian tribe.

Beginning my return on September 25, I passed in succes-
sion through Capirendá, Carandayty, López de Filippis, and
Puerto Casado, arriving in Asunción on October 8.

C
[122] Thanks to the great help of the military authorities, it was
possible for me to pass through large areas of the Paraguayan
Chaco during the relatively short time of two months, to get
acquainted with a large number of native tribes of the Chaco,
to take photographs of these tribes, and to make up vocabularies
000 of their different languages. Outside of the Toba, whom I met

"moon" (i-que-lacq). In this they agree with the languages of all nations, a thing which is still preserved amongst us in poetic usage, while the common language of prose has undergone such changes with the passage of time that the words no longer appear to have their primitive material significance of sun and moon.

Either by analogy from "moon" to "a light" or vice versa, the fact is that the word for both "moon" and "a light" is the same.

This is not true of the word for "fire," for to this element special properties are attributed as the Chiriguanos condemn the bodies of those who die in the odor, or rather, taste, of evil, to be burned; and the Tobas and Matacos burn all bodies. This practice among the two latter nations is to be explained by their desire to hasten as much as possible the final condition which will benefit the deceased, that is, that as soon as the fleshy parts are consumed the soul will be able to descend into the earth and be among its companions.

[213] Despite the fact that they are innocent of matches and sulfur, not to mention steel for striking fire, since they have no flint, they can produce fire at will. I have already described the manner in which they do this; by twirling one stick rapidly upon another which is lying on the ground until the sawdust which results -- which looks like finely powdered roasted coffee grounds -- begins to glow. Then they heap a kind of highly combustible wood onto it, blow it until a flame appears and from this they can make as large a fire as they wish. One of the two sticks which they use is from the chilca bush, which is aromatic, resinous and porous and is found in abundance throughout the Argentine Republic.

It is customary to say that each Indian does everything for himself, and that this is the cause for his slowness and backwardness. But this is not so. They may be wanderers, but they do not for this reason refrain from a certain distribution of labor. There are amongst them weapon makers, canoe builders, net makers, weavers, etc., who sell their manufactured goods to their companions and receive others in exchange for them. They have, then, their guilds of arts and skills, but in an embryonic stage, of course. They also have particular terms to express themselves in this field, which in Mataco are formed from the word which indicates an object plus a particle indicative of function. Of these particles <u>)hi</u>

X 539 X 773 up to their fields and tried to catch the women. They buried themselves in the ground in an effort to escape, but the armadillo said he would dig them out. He dug out one after another. The men took them. The same thing happened each time he pulled a woman out of the ground. In the end, angry because he could not keep a wife for himself, he put out the eye of a woman and made her so ugly that no one wanted her. From that time on men have had women.

X 539 X 773 826 The wild women had toothed vulvas. A bird saw them eating corn with their vulvas. He warned the people, but *Tawkxwax*, the Trickster, would not believe him and slept with one of the women, who cut his penis. *Tawkxwax* took a bone and put it in place of his lost organ. He then went in pursuit of the woman and found her just as she was crouching to light a fire. He threw a stone between her legs and broke the teeth of her vagina. From that time on men have had sexual intercourse with women without being mutilated.

67. The Stealing of the Fire (Pedro)

X 539 X 773 372 In olden times the jaguar was the sole owner of fire. He would give some of it away only if presents were given him in return. The people would take fish to him and in exchange the jaguar gave them fire with which to cook. Once a rat with a flattened head, the *sičúm*, tried to steal some fire. He dug his way into the earth until he was underneath the hearth of the jaguar. The jaguar had been watching his fire and he saw the rat just as he was about to take an ember. He struck the rat on the head and that is why it is [825] flat now. Another rat succeeded in stealing an ember. This rat has a black spot on his neck. He was lucky enough to get close to the fire without being seen. He picked up an ember and ran off holding it against his neck. He still has a burnt spot there, the mark of the fire. Using the inside of a cactus as tinder he lighted a big fire and then he distributed it. That is why all men have fire.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

68. The Stealing of the Fire (second version) (Martin)

539X 773X 372●

At the time when there were just animals, the jaguar was the only one to have fire. He bad a big hearth. A little rodent, the *wiyés*, passed by. Whenever the jaguar turned his head the rabbit would put some embers aside. The jaguar saw that he was touching the embers so he said, »Don't touch the fire, you will burn yourself.» The little animal pretended that he was cold and was shivering. He picked an ember up and put it under his chin. He said to the jaguar, »I go, I feel warm». He ran away and threw the ember into the middle of a meadow. All the world began to burn. The jaguar went to put the fire out, but he could not. In this way the people of the world got fire.

539X 773X [825]

Now the jaguar had no fire. He decided to take it away from man. He went to their village and sent a woman with a jar full of water to put out the fire. The woman emptied the jar, but could not put out the fire. She and the jaguar got their soles badly burnt. Hence the soles of a jaguar's paws are dark.

The jaguar went back to his den very ill. He remained there a long time in such condition. As no one came to bring him fish in exchange for fire and as he did not know how to hunt, he suffered greatly from hunger. He spent days and nights in his hut on an empty stomach and he was very miserable. One day a little tiger cat (*silak'ai*) called on him. This animal was an expert in hunting and he decided to teach the jaguar how to catch food. The tiger cat leaped on animals, killed them and brought his victims to the jaguar. The first victim of the tiger cat was an *aguara*, (*potsax*) a very large bird which eats crabs. The cat jumped on the *aguara* but was not able to kill him outright. The bird flew into the sky and it was not until they were 300 feet above the ground that the cat killed him. They dropped to earth but the cat was not injured. He took the bird to the jaguar. Within ten days the jaguar learned to hunt by himself. He killed

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

X 539 X 773 animals and ate them raw because he had no fire to cook them with.

In ancient times the jaguar was a woman and the rodent who stole the fire from her was a man. Later they were changed into animals.

● [372] The Trickster, *Tawkxwax* put fire into the *sunchu* wood and that is why we make our fire-drills with this wood[1].

69. Origin of the Mead (Pedro)

X 539 X 773 2/3 In ancient times there was no mead. An old man tried to make it with some honey (*nesla*). He mixed the honey with water and left the mixture to ferment for one night. The next day he tasted it and found it very good. The other people did not want to taste the drink as they thought it might be poison one. The old man said. »I will drink because I am very old and if I died it would not matter.» The old man drank much of the mixture and he fell down as if dead. That night he awoke and told the people that the beer was not a poison. The men carved a larger trough (*tsemLák*) and drank all the beer they made. It was a bird who carved the first drum, he beat it all night and at dawn he was changed into a man.

70. The Arrow Bridge (Martin)

X 539 X 773 There was a very clever young man. He was good and never did anything wrong, but people did not like him. He went away and joined some people of the old times, men who had lived long, long ago and who were very intelligent. They took him away to a city in the middle of the sea. The old men thought that the boy would never be able to leave this place, but he made a bow and some arrows. He shot first arrow into the shore opposite, then he shot a second one into the butt of the first. and then a third into the butt of

[1] The second and third part of this version has been narrated by my informant Pedro.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6 Mataco SI7

C 322 [372]

Fig. 148. Fire-drilling implement, consisting of two wooden sticks. Choroti. Gran Chaco, Bolivia. 1/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 193.

For scraping and polishing wooden objects, pieces of mussel-shell are used. Formerly, when the Choroti could not obtain iron, all woodwork was produced exclusively by means of fire and mussel-shells. In shaping a piece of wood, the parts that were to come away were burnt in the fire, and the charred parts then scraped off with a sharp-edged piece of mussel-shell.

Nordenskiöld mentions that the Choroti, in the same way as other Chaco tribes, use saws made of hard wood with which they, among other things, saw off the stem and leaves of the, to the Indians so important, caraguatá plant,[1] after having grubbed it up with a fork-like digging stick.

C [412]

Fig. 149. Stems of a liana (Asclepiadaceæ), which forms the material of which fire-drilling implements of the Choroti generally are made. Gran Chaco, Bolivia. 1/1. Riksm. 03. 3. 196.

C 412 321

Awls for working purposes are made of bone (fig. 147). Bone awls are also used for tattooing (see p. 75, 78), magical blood-letting (see pp. 63 and 64), and as weapons of offence (see p. 101).

C 372 [415 237] M [372 415 237]

Like other Chaco tribes, the Choroti produce fire by drilling. Their fire-kindling implement consists of two round-sectioned, dry sticks of wood (fig 148), usually obtained from a species of liana (of the Asclepiadaceæ), fig. 149. One stick (the female one), which is thicker, and usually longer, than the other one (the male stick), has one or more bowl-shaped indentations, at

Fig. 150. Tail of armadillo, used as a tinder box. Mataco. Gran Chaco, Argentina. Exactly similar tinder-boxes are used by the Choroti. 2/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 572.

[1] Nordenskiöld (11), pp. 63 and 66, also (18), pp. 110 and 111.

stemmed from the desire which the whites have of keeping the Indians from settling and taking possession (a fact recognized by Argentine law) of the excellent land which the local whites look upon as legitimate prey for the future.

They do not indulge in commercial enterprises; and how could they possibly do so when they have no agriculture or industries, being only wanderers and nomads? However, they do practice barter on a small scale, which is their only form of primitive, embryonic commerce. They do not have words for "buying and selling," and in order to express this idea it would seem that they had gone to some of school of economics to learn the exchange formula do ut des; for, strangely enough the Matacos, for example, instead of saying "sell me" say atquiocq niquiocq, which means "give me I give you."

One can gather from this that they have no form of money; but they have invented a word to signify our coins, which is tdócq-kynat among the Matacos and which means hide or skin of metal. Kynat is a generic word which covers all metals which do not exist or circulate in the Chaco. It would appear from this that it is a word invented prior to the appearance of paper money.

Nevertheless there is a sort of medium of exchange, though in only an incipient stage, among the inhabitants of the Chaco. It is a substance which the Indians use to paint themselves with and which is highly valued by them even in the smallest amounts. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra the plant which produces it is called urucú. This paint is obtained by boiling the fruit of the urucú for twenty-four hours, when the coloring matter floats to the top and is collected and made into small pellets of varying sizes. The dye is exuded from the skin of the fruit, which is about the size of an orange. The fruit with a blackist skin produces a black dye, the one with yellow skin gives an orange or red dye and the fruit having a white skin produces a green dye. The skin on the yellow and white varieties is about as thick as the outer covering on a walnut. Each one of the three grows on a different kind of urucú, all of which are plants which grow to be about as tall as a man, with fruit about the size of a pomegranate which split open of their own accord when they are ripe.

Although this substance is produced and made in Bolivia, it is current among all the Chaco Indians and is used by them to

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba 5112

The favourit colour of the
Indians is red or vermilion, the paint being obtained from the seeds of the plant *Bixa orellana*. But this beautiful shrub does not grow in the Gran Chaco. The Chaco tribes only obtain the paint they appreciate so much from the Indians in the north by means of intertribal commerce.

The Chaco Indians are also in the habit of blackening the face with soot or charcoal on certain occasions.

The typical way of painting the face both for men and women is either to colour the whole face and forehead red with *urucú*,[1] or black with charcoal, or only to apply red or black spots, lines, small squares etc. to the cheeks, to the nose, round the mouth and above the eyes. The eye, which is the organ of the most important sense and the one most exposed to disorders, is generally painted with special care. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are only drawn along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled out; sometimes protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, especially by the women. Among the *Tobas*, persons of both sexes generally have the face and forehead painted red. But besides this typical facial painting the Toba women — seldom the men — are in the habit of making special patterns or ornaments upon their cheeks on certain occasions. The patterns used by the Tobas seem to be comparatively few in number; we do not find among them the same abundance of designs as for instance among the Choroti and the Ashluslay. Custom does not require that any special kind of pattern should be applied on a particular occasion. Every woman, for instance for a religious dance or feast, paints upon her face what designs she likes and invents at the moment.

If one asks a Toba girl why she paints her face, she will in most cases simply give the answer that it is considered beautiful, sometimes she will say that it is to please and attract the men. When I asked other people about the matter I was told that the Toba girls paint themselves when they particularly desired a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive for thus decorating the face, for facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, on closer inquiry I found that the Toba women are in the habit of painting themselves *at the time of their menses*, in order to have a protective charm against the evil influences of which they especially then stand in fear. The ideas

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI7

age of Herrera. The Spaniards must have thought them peculiar, since SIMON, who as a rule does not go into the details of ethnographical objects, decribes them minutely. It was on the R. Orinoco that the Indians wore them. They must also have been in use in other parts than Venezuela and the Chaco, though not noticed there, since it is improbable that the Indians in the Chaco and in Venezuela should have indepently hit upon the use of such stockings.

The Ashluslay and the Choroti wear *girdles*, now made of wool, now of leather.

The woven girdles in S. America belong to the westerly cultural elements. We find them in old graves on the Peruvian coast[1]). I have seen them among the Aymara, Quichua, Chiriguano, Chané, Mataco[2]), Choroti, Ashluslay, Toba, and Tapiete. They are known from the

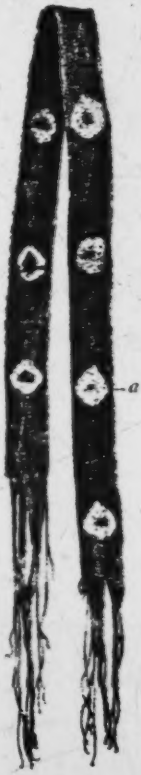

Fig. 30. Girdle coloured by «tying round»-dyeing, Mataco. R. M. (M. 50). 1/10.

cienagas con que se defendian de vnos peces que los Españoles llamaron Caribes por ser tan fieros, y atreuidos q̄ hasen presa en todo lo que topan dentro del agua: y assiendo destos nudos quando entrauan los Indios a pescar, quedaua libre la carne de sus vocas. SIMON, p. 224.

[1]) UHLE (2).

[2]) The Mataco Indians occasionally dye the woven girdle in a way that is of anthropo-geographical interest. They use the «tying round» method of dyeing, which is as follows: Those parts of the material that are to remain undyed, are firmly bound round, whereupon the material is dipped in the dye. The parts «tied round» remain undyed (Fig. 30 a) This method was in use on the Peruvian coast, as well as in the Chaco. A piece of material dyed in this way was brought home by STOLPE (R. M.) It was presumably found at Ancon. The same method is known to the Quichua-Mestizos on Mt. Calilegua in N. Argentina, and has thus, as far as can be judged, reached the Chaco from the mountain culture.

137

used industrially, the yuchan and the châguar (which has fiber serviceable in making rope) [192] as they are to be found over an enormous territory and grow without need of cultivation, would be of great commercial value.

Another interesting tree that has domestic use and may some day be employed industrially is the pacara (Enterolobium timboiva). It is a tree of great beauty, very tall, of large girth and having a great deal of foliage -- it is of the mimosa family. Its fruit is a flat, oblong, twisted pod of a dark chestnut color about an inch and a half long and which contains 12 percent to 15 percent of saponin. This pod is used [388] to get the grease out of clothes and wool.

To finish as we had started, I must add that the Indians are great 273 lovers of the alcoholic beverages common among the whites, and become so drunk as to be floored. Even in this detail are they like those who are not their brothers in Christ.

Chapter VII

Wars

The Indians are much addicted to wars, it must be confessed, 721 and they are perpetually fighting; it is -- if I may be allowed the expression -- a continual giving and taking.

One war follows another, either because the vanquished wish to avenge their previous losses or because the victors have begun to enjoy their victories. Causes for war are: having fished, hunted or harvested in foreign territory, or the need to annul an offence or the hope of gain.

These wars are not strategic ones in which one battle follows another until the enemy is helpless to defend himself; rather are they surprise attacks on camps with the object of overwhelming and pillaging them and carrying off cattle, boys and sometimes even women.

This is why the camps or villages, in forested regions, always 361 have flanks and back right up against the deep woods, where, if surprised, the inhabitants may find refuge, and where it would be impossible to pursue them as there is a veritable labyrinth of paths known only to the inhabitants of the village.

During the aloja revels squabbles, fights and killings are frequent, and this not only among the Indians but among the Chaco whites also. 578

A couple of words now about the yuchan, also called palo borracho (drunken tree--Translator). It is a bombaceous tree whose scientific name is Chorisia insignis, and might well be called the cotton tree. It has a strange shape which justifies its vernacular name. The trunk is shaped like an oil jar, that is, narrow at its base, wide in the middle and narrow once more at the point where the crown forks. The trunk grows to a diameter of two meters and is covered with spiked bumps. At most it reaches a height of four or five meters and is often accompanied by a shoot growing at its base. The crown is at first made up of only two branches which later subdivide and form a wide crown of some eight, ten or more meters in diameter. The leaves are similar to those of the walnut but a little smaller and provide good shade. 137

From the bark, strips are cut which are used for tying bundles, as roofing material, to wrap and tie bunches of tobacco leaves and for any similar use. The Indians make their canoes from the trunk, all of a piece. In order to do this all they do is hollow it out with any old tool, since the wood is soft and easily worked when newly cut but later becomes harder than cork although spongy like it when dry. The Matacos use the name cuóu quiác for canoe, which in their tongue means "duck." 824 [283] [396]

But the thing which is especially interesting about the yuchan is its fruit, which in size and shape is like a lemon. When it is ripe, which usually occurs between November and January, according to its location, the lemons split into four lobes and there appears a plume-like puff of cotton, white as snow, which little by little is carried away by the wind. 137

One of these open lemons is about the size of a fist, and each tree produces hundreds of them each year.

The Indians make a limited use of this cotton, but the whites do not, although I have seen in Catamarca, where the number of these trees is small, white cloth made from this material which won prizes at the Córdoba exhibition.

In the Chaco there is an immense number of yuchans which grow mixed in with other hard-wood trees. If this cotton could be

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; güu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something; for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lúték; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-ʾhi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets M [415] which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's M [531] opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M 396 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 323 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

C M 175 Mocobies, and the Palomos, which are almost at an end, all have the same customs, and are similar in every way, which is the reason for our lumping them together in order to speak of them as a whole, without differentiating between one and another. All are Caribs, eaters of human flesh, abominable in the extreme, untrustworthy and much given to warring, which flares up amongst them easily. They sometimes fight against the Guaycurûs, and do so continuously against the Spanish although in their attacks upon the Spaniards they are more like thieves than soldiers for they never face them but rather attack by surprise and by ambush, making very sure before doing so of the enemy strength by C M 175 means of spies. These latter are tireless in their spying and will keep watch upon the Spanish positions for a year or two or three, observing 726 everything very carefully under cover of darkness, to see whether they will meet with resistance or not, and until they are absolutely sure of their superiority, they bide their time; so when they do attack one can be sure that the result can be but one, and that there is no danger in it for them. These spies creep about at night on all fours, so that their elbows are covered with callouses, and they never attack, since they are alone, and if they are heard they scurry away with great ease, and some with the help of magic take the shape of some tame animal in order to go about their spyings more easily. Although they will not openly face the Spanish, they will, when escape is impossible, fight valorously, and sell their lives dearly, as can be seen every day and as was experienced five years ago by an officer commanding the regiment of the city of Santiago del Estero who, coming upon five Mocovíes in the forest, surrounded them with his men, but they resisted bravely, wounding many Spaniards before dying, and the last who remained alone with his wife, continued to keep up the battle, his wife supplying him with arms, and would not give himself up until he was riddled with bullets, having first wounded many Spaniards with his arrows, the C M commanding officer almost mortally. The weapons which they all use 175 [575] are arrows, clubs and darts, which they fashion expertly from a 411 certain hard wood. Their darts are very long, about 15 hand breadths, and very heavy, but they use them with great dexterity and agility. The head is made from the antlers of deer, and is not firmly embedded in the shaft but rather is loose and has a small cord tied to it so that when the dart is jabbed into the body of an enemy and the shaft quickly snatched out, the point remains in the wound and the enemy kept from escaping by means of the cord, for the lance head cannot be pulled

C M 175 411 [111] from the body without making the wound much longer because a barb is carved into it and this impedes its being drawn out. If they have time they invariably decapitate those of their enemies whom they wound in battle, and they do this with great dexterity as they find the joint between the vertebrae in a moment and sever the head with one slash of their knives made from the jawbone of the "palometa" [a vicious type of fish which also goes by the name of "piraña"--Translator]. After the head has been severed the scalp is removed and then stretched and dried, and kept in order to celebrate their more important fiestas and to demonstrate their bravery.

C M 175 492 "They used, in the old days, to go about on foot, but they have since become great horsemen having stolen large numbers of horses from the ranches and towns of the Spaniards. From the city of Santa Fé alone and in the space of only 20 years they have made off with some 15,000 horses. That is why they are such good riders today, surpassing the Spaniards. Running after a fleeing horse and using only their lances to help them off the ground they will leap upon it and mount either from the side or from behind. They do not use stirrups and their saddles are very meager affairs, so much so that they often ride saddleless, but so swiftly that only rarely can the Spanish overtake them for they make their horses fly by whipping them with a three tailed lash which they always carry with them. When on the warpath they are happy with but skimpy rations which each carries for himself, and they make fun of the many preparations which the Spaniards make since they, with a small amount of half-grilled meat and whatever they can glean from the countryside in the way of fruit or other things undertake treks of a hundred leagues to wage war, their bed being the hard ground or at most a stiff cowhide. But this is nothing unusual for them since their beds are hardly of better stuff when they are at home.

C M 175 513 554 "These latter are made of straw which is spread all over the floor of their habitation which, although low-ceilinged, is very long in order to allow room for the whole family group to stretch out, each family having its own fire in the center. The oldest lies down [576] at the head in the place of greatest prestige and then, on either side, his sons according to age, followed by the grandchildren and other descendents, each with their families in such a manner that the way in which they lie down to sleep is a living representation of the family tree. They have no covering other than the branches and grasses with which they thatch their hovels, and in which a fire burns continually.

The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her
262 hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense--sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
● [411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting; 721 262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of [227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness 231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from 241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they 519 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, 352
such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and 196
"hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to 411
one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed 361
symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the 252
very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild 262
fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are 323
made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usu- 264
ally at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out [252]
and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the 262

this shared work has its cause in that the last two mentioned products must necessarily be gathered within a certain limited period and therefore the Indians have need of the combined effort of all the workers they can muster in order to harvest all they possibly can. 222 462

For the making of nets they must first, naturally, begin by making twine, which they call niñ'hiói. They get their textile material from a bromelia which in Quechua is called chāguar (a name now also used by the white settlers) and in Mataco hūié. They steep the leaves of this plant in water for a time and then comb them with a clam shell. Once this has been done the residue is put out into the sun to dry and whiten. The last stage is that of twisting the fiber -- a wad of it is held in the left hand and rubbed back and forth [182] on a leg, upon which they sprinkle a little gypsum in order to avoid getting hurt. This gypsum powder is called maccotāc-muc. 283

The twine being thus ready they make not only nets with it but also ropes, which they call niñ'hioi-less, which means family or skein of threads.

Some of the Indians have special skill in making weapons, and make them as a means of barter with their companions. They use a very hard wood for the bow, and ostrich [rhea--Translator] tendons or strips of hide for the string. The arrow shaft is made of cane, the head of some hard wood, often tipped with bone and barbed like a fish hook. 411

Chapter V

Marriage Customs

Those who do not know anything about the Indians may believe that they lead morally and materially sterile lives. Yet this is not actually the case: the savage loves, hates and knows what ambition, enjoyments, dangers and glory are. He is acquainted with religion and with fear. In these primitive societies the whole gamut of human affections is experienced precisely "as among the whites," as Faustino used to say to me when I asked him about the intimate experiences of the Indian way of life. 152

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

said, is a 'hót among the Matacos.

This confusion frees them, at least in so far as language is concerned, from the vice of intolerance which is so strong with us. So it is that they call our church tohuó-hoto 'hi which literally means: "that which contains the a 'hóts," that is, "the a 'hohi or Christian gods."

This is also the term for cemetery, in which they are in agreement with the inhabitants of those parts who use the word pantheon, which among the Greeks was reserved for demigods and with us for persons of great fame.

In the Chaco and in the whole northern part of the Argentine Republic where people are more democratic, egalitarian, ironical and also ingenuous, the term pantheon is used to denote a plot of cleared, grass covered land. This plot is quite open to access and allows free entrance to jaguars and dogs who go there to feast at the expense of the fresh corpse of a white, Negro or mulatto, but certainly not of a Greek demigod or of even a member of more modern divinity!

At this rate there will come a time when the word pantheon will sound offensive.

Not only are the a 'hóts able to enter into people, bewitch them, become incarnate (allow me the neologism) in them and in [202] elements of an evil nature such as storms, smallpox, famine, etc. but they are also able to wield daggers and even shoot with bows and arrows.

But it seems that they only indulge in this business of shooting people with arrows when called upon by the witch doctors who, in Mataco, are called "háyagñé," and in Chiriguano, "ippaya." This seems also to be the case with the "gualicho" of the Araucano Indians, who in fact have a verb to express this action, which is "cúllin." The corresponding Mataco verb is "ioco."

It can readily be understood why the witch doctors have chosen the arrow as the preferred weapon of the evil spirit, since it is the only weapon in use among the Indians which lends itself to mystery and deceit because, as it is a projectile it can be loosed from any quarter and from afar, the bowman remaining hidden.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909) 1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI7

PATER SCHMIDT[1]) mentions such clubs from the Tsirakua[2]) Ashluslay, Choroti, Sanapana, Chamacoco, Pilaga, Payaguá Mataco, Lengua, Mascoi, Guaná, and from the old culture zone in the West.[3]) I may add the Tupinambá[4]) and the Tapiete. PATER SCHMIDT points out[5]) that the occurrence of this type of club in the Chaco points to influences from the mountain culture. Here he is probably right.

A C 411

It is of great interest to note the distribution of wooden clubs with clearly marked heads, and of clubs with stone heads. In S. Brazil, as in the Andes, we find stone clubheads. In the Chaco they are exclusively of wood, the very natural reason being that there are no stones. The occurrence of stone clubheads in S. Brazil will be the more readily understood on the assumption that the wooden club in the Chaco is a local form of the stone-headed Andes club.

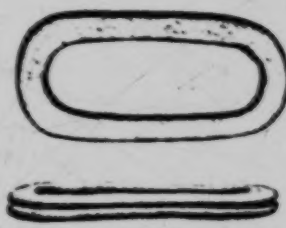

Fig. 10. Knuckle-duster. Mataco. R. M. (03. 3. 674) 1/3.

M [411]

A rare weapon in S. America, which is found in the Chaco among the (1) Choroti, (6) Mataco, (3) Tapiete and (2) Ashluslay, is the knuckle-duster (Map 5)[a]. It is used there by the women. Most knuckle-dusters in the Chaco are made of wood or Tapir hide. The knuckle-duster depicted above, which is of wood, is from the Mataco (Fig. 10). A drawing of a knuckle-duster of tapir hide from the Ashluslay is given in «Indianerleben».[6]) From the distribution of the knuckle-

A C M 411

[1]) p. 1027.

[2]) Incorrectly quoted from my book, «Indianerleben», SCHMIDT substituting Siriono for Tsirakua. The little missile clubs of the last-named Indians are, moreover, very different from those of the other Chaco Indians. (See «Indianerleben» fig. 140).

[3]) p. 1052.

[4]) LERY, Fig. p. 241.

[5]) p. 1027.

[6]) Fig. 37.

a [i.e., Map 6. – Analyst]

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∞ The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 175 291 "The men usually go about stark naked without a stitch on, although their skins are so tanned by the rough weather that they seem to be covered by animal hide or leather, particularly the old men, who are numerous, because the inclemencies of weather do not harm them, they having been used to such rigors since childhood. I saw in Santa Fé the head of a Mocobí Indian, who must have been about 40 years old, the skin of which was more than half a finger thick. The women go about entirely covered, from head to toe, in animal skins, and the principal women attire themselves in cloth made from a pliant plant larger than the agave, which in this province is called "chaguar" and grows wild. From it they make a thread similar to that used by cobblers, and then weave their clothes to which the daughters and wives of the more important men add some black and white ornamentation. From this same fibre they also make jars which, C M [445] cemented over with wax, can hold water pretty well and also the beverages with which they get drunk.

"All the women paint their faces, breasts and arms in the C M same manner as the moorish women of Africa and Spain, and those 302 175 of most consequence do this in intricate patterns which remain in [304] the skin permanently, for their mothers from the day they are born start to fix the dyes in their very flesh with the help of the large sharp bones of certain fish. They also use a dark blue dye, although not to such an extent, on their male children. In addition to this the mothers pluck the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, leaving a completely bald swath three fingers wide running from the forehead to the crown of the head on which the hair never grows again. Thus do the Mocobíes, Tobas, Agoyas, Taymies and Aquilotes go about, both men and women, and the latter are extremely ugly as a consequence although, to their thinking, they are very beautiful. And in order that the women pull their hair out, the Devil is wont to appear to them in the form of an Indian woman who comes out of the nearest forest covered with a net and tells them that those who will not allow themselves to be plucked are not to eat fish, for should they do so, they will die. [577] So that if some C M woman, fearing the pain, resists having her hair pulled, she later [262] allows it so as to be able to eat fish which is their favorite food. Others of these Indian nations do not make these pathlike inroads in

415 323 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

302 "Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best 291 286 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala 415 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of [276] bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked. 302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

262 "Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat [252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food. [261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

273 579 "From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

533 222 "When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a central place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material
● [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

"There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any
622 621 authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

"They marry without any visible ceremony and without
582 formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come
585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's
595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery
837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose
776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed,

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; güu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something; for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lúték; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-ʾhi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M [415] M [537]

M 346 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 313 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

Those pots which are used to contain water have an indented waistline around which a rope may be passed when they need to be transported. This rope, running around the jar, is slipped over the carrier's forehead and the vessel is carried on his back, to which effect he must bend back and neck forward. This manner of transportation is no where near as graceful as that of carrying jars on the head as our country women do, and rather makes the Indian women look like beasts of burden -- however, it may well be a more hygienic way and is, in any case, more practical when traveling along half choked forest paths.

They have no knowledge of, and do not practice, agriculture; yet they do sometimes plant corn (which, as is well known, originated in America) and also pumpkins. When they think it is time to go and eat the crop, they harvest it. They do not grind the corn, but boil it and the pumpkins also while they are yet green -- a harvest, then, is gathered in piece meal and lasts quite a long time. In order to sow they make use of a hard wood spade in the form of a small oar, or a large spear head; the husband makes a hole in the earth, his squaw throws in the seed, covers it, and that is all. The seed is sown in a recently burned off, damp field, that is, one which has just been rained on.

The crop is owned communally by all, but they are nigardly with it concerning outsiders. While we were on the ship, most of our food having run out, we hungered for fresh provisions and vegetables, for we had been without them for more than three months. When the Indians made us a present of pumpkins and ears of corn we were more than delighted. These Indians were friendly, but later on their friendliness proved false for they killed our interpreter. The sailors managed to discover the location of the pumpkin patch and corn field and raided them by stealth. On the following day, when they returned to the cultivated plots they found that everything had been destroyed and not a single growing plant was left. We were never able to find even one of the Indians.

It seems, also, that the whites do not want the Indians to take up agriculture. I was told that the white settlers once [215] came upon a number of fields sown by friendly frontier Indians, and destroyed them so completely that the discouraged Indians had never again planted so much as a handbreadth of land. This action

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

We have already seen that the most appreciated of these drinks is algaroba beer, which by the Mataco and the Choroti is called *atäs*, by the Tobas again *maplyi*. The tree itself and its fruit is called *oáh* in the Mataco and the Choroti language, in the Toba language *map*. The sacred beer is prepared with the utmost care and with certain religious or magical ceremonies. At this preparation there appears a strict division of labour between men and women. Although the women are not allowed to drink of the beer, they seemingly perform the larger part of the work. They collect the fruit in the forest, carrying it home in their large caraguatá bags, and afterwards mash it in mortars. Some old women start to chew the fruit, mixing it well with saliva, whereupon they spit it out into a goat's hide, fixed in the ground by means of sticks in such a way that it forms a sort of vessel. The goat's hide is used by the Choroti and by the Argentine Mataco, whereas the Tobas and the Bolivian Mataco use a wooden trough for the purpose. Lastly, hot water is poured over the mashed fruit.

These preparations require nearly a whole day. The most essential thing still remains, namely the fermentation, and to effect this is a duty solely incumbent on the men, since women as a rule do not take part in conjurations. The fermentation is sacred, because it means the birth of the good spirit. Now this happens in the night, but night is the time when evil spirits move about. According to the belief of the Indians, the invisible persecutors appear in great numbers in order to prevent the birth of the good spirit and interfere with the drink so that it cannot ferment and is entirely spoiled. Therefore special precautions must be taken for the critical time. The brewing of the algaroba beer for the great festivals during the algaroba season is — especially among the primitive Choroti — a matter that concerns the whole community. Hence, at the approach of night, the men arrive from all houses with their rattle gourds, sit round the hide or trough, and begin to chant a noisy, monotonous song without words, shaking the rattles in the rhythm of their chant. This ceremony is called by the Choroti *nissammaka oáh*, by the Tobas *niapálák map*, and its most conspicuous object is to prevent the spirits from spoiling the beer. Since the new moon is believed to promote fermentation, a moonlight night is preferably chosen for the ceremony. The chant is typical of the Indian conjurations in the Chaco. It is always begun in a loud voice; then the voice gradually dies down, so that the last tones are only heard as a low and distant muttering. Thereupon they start again from the beginning, and so forth. In addi-

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *caraguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

[222]
[415]

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [541] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality—they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the [577] other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should [684] possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyl*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 118 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

Plate IX

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[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6 Mataco SI7

C 322 [372]

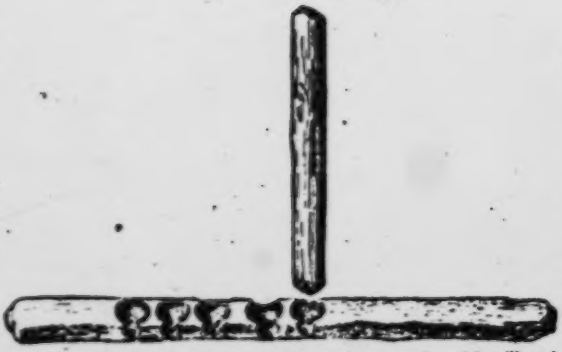

Fig. 148. Fire-drilling implement, consisting of two wooden sticks. Choroti. Gran Chaco, Bolivia. 2/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 193.

For scraping and polishing wooden objects, pieces of mussel-shell are used. Formerly, when the Choroti could not obtain iron, all woodwork was produced exclusively by means of fire and mussel-shells. In shaping a piece of wood, the parts that were to come away were burnt in the fire, and the charred parts then scraped off with a sharp-edged piece of mussel-shell.

Nordenskiöld mentions that the Choroti, in the same way as other Chaco tribes, use saws made of hard wood with which they, among other things, saw off the stem and leaves of the, to the Indians so important, caraguatá plant,[1] after having grubbed it up with a fork-like digging stick.

C [412]

Fig. 149. Stems of a liana (Asclepiadaceæ), which forms the material of which fire-drilling implements of the Choroti generally are made. Gran Chaco, Bolivia. 1/4. Riksm. 03. 3. 196.

C [412 321]

Awls for working purposes are made of bone (fig. 147). Bone awls are also used for tattooing (see p. 75, 78), magical blood-letting (see pp. 63 and 64), and as weapons of offence (see p. 101).

C 372 [415 237] M 372 415 237

Like other Chaco tribes, the Choroti produce fire by drilling. Their fire-kindling implement consists of two round-sectioned, dry sticks of wood (fig 148), usually obtained from a species of liana (of the Asclepiadaceæ), fig. 149. One stick (the female one), which is thicker, and usually longer, than the other one (the male stick), has one or more bowl-shaped indentations, at

Fig. 150. Tail of armadillo, used as a tinder box, Mataco. Gran Chaco. Argentina. Exactly similar tinder boxes are used by the Choroti. 2/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 573.

[1] Nordenskiöld (11), pp. 63 and 66, also (18), pp. 110 and 111.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Ashluslay SK5
Mataco SI 7

A
M
415

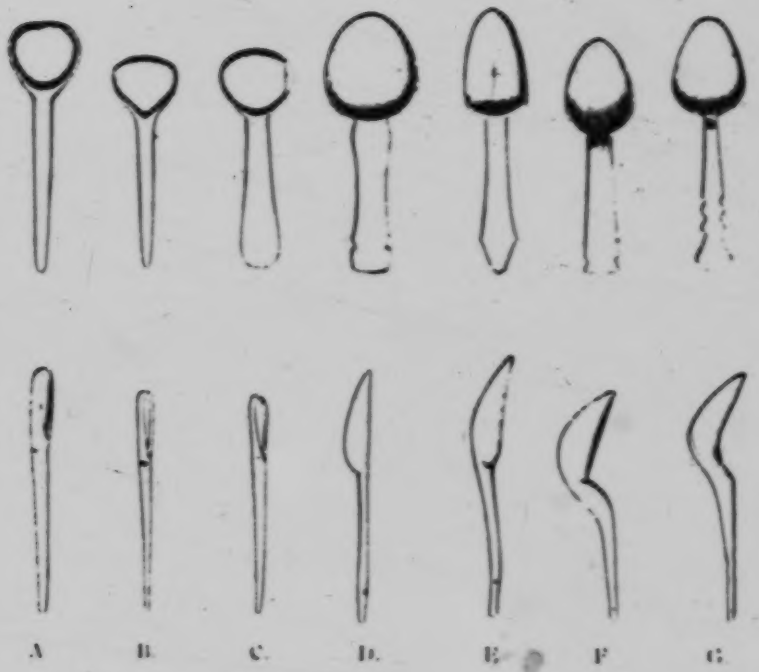

Fig 24.

A.	Wooden	spoon.	Ashluslay	R. M. A.	215	1/4
B.	»	»	»	» »	212	»
C	»	»	»	G. M. C.	100	»
D.	»	»	Tapiete	R. M Lt.	6.	»
E.	»	»	Mataco	» M.	382	»
F.	»	»	Chané	» P.	97	»
G.	»	»	Mataco	» M.	1061	»

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

pronounced the same incantation. *blew on* the dresses which were unfolded and taken away. On the heap of dresses had been placed a gun wrapped in a red belt richly inlaid with shells. One of the dancers seized the gun and slinging it over his shoulder executed a dance bearing a certain likeness to the one he had done before. The dancers were relatives of the sick man, probably his sons.

755 535

b) *Treatment of Disease*

A rich woman who was seriously ill was cured by five renowned medicine men. A big open space of about fifteen feet square was cleared not far from her house. Wooden posts were erected and a sort of tent set up. One of the posts, about 20 feet high, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentine flag. Around the tent were placed the objects required by the disease, those which are supposed to please him, a mosquito net, a weaving loom, an old suitcase, pieces of gaudily colored cloth, a saddle, a soldier's coat, a lamp, a lance or a gun. A little further away fires were burning where the disease's food was being prepared and a pail of water was being heated for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a pile of hay and old rags. She had put on her best dress and was covered with ritual ornaments. The five shamans, who were old men, were equally adorned with feather belts, rattles, tropical helmets and other precious objects. The lower part of their faces was painted black.

755 [417] [302]

There were also some twenty dancers wearing feathers, red belts adorned with shells, rattles, caps, red pieces of cloth, whistles and old broken watches, while perhaps ten old women ran about holding rags in their hands and one even held an umbrella. Everybody, including the sick person, danced and sang, at times the medicine-men and the sick woman stopped, they blew on her and the dancing was resumed. After a while the chief medicine-man whistled on

755 535 [292]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

476 upon as perfectly natural, and since full reciprocity exists, such an act of apparent liberality does not even evoke feelings of gratitude in those who for the moment are the objects of it. Those who have been travelling and 574 therefore have not produced crops, or those who for some other reason have no means of subsistence for the time being, have a claim on the hospitality of their fellow-tribesmen. Even when there is nowhere a real want the successful hunter or fisher gladly shares his abundance of food with other families of the village, knowing that others will do the same to him on another occasion.

574 Native law enjoins hospitality not only to fellow-tribesmen but also to members of foreign tribes with which the Indians stand on a friendly 609 footing. The same hospitality and liberality is shown to a white man whom the Indians regard as their friend. For my own part I frequently had, both among the Tobas and the Choroti, personal experience of this Indian hospitality.

421 In spite of the liberality which appears in the relations of the different members of the community to one another, private property is strictly respected in all the tribes. We can particularly speak of socialism in regard to the *land*, which, as I have mentioned before, is considered to belong to the people in general; no Indian, not even a chief, has a direct claim to any part of it above his fellows. The flocks of sheep and goats feed on the common pasture. Similarly the natural products of the country, such as game, fish, wild fruit, honey, and fire-wood, are common property. But as soon as an individual family has taken possession of a piece of this common land for cultivation, its ownership is acknowledged and respected as long as the family actually cultivates it. What the Indian collects of the natural products of the country and what he produces or acquires through his own work — such as clothes, ornaments, weapons and implements, magical instruments, etc. — is also regarded as his exclusive property, although, as soon as food is in question, an unwritten moral law and social sympathy largely induces the individual owner to share it with others. The flocks of course also belong to individual families. The sheep and goats always wear property marks, so that when they are taken home from the pasture in the afternoon the Indians can easily determine who is the owner of each animal.

556 The lower Chaco tribes, particularly the Choroti and the Ashluslay, do not know of any distinctions between rich and poor, and even among the Tobas it is a comparatively rare thing that a man possesses more than his fellows. Only a few great chiefs who have made successful wars against

Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception. 462

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chăguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have. 595 422 556

Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families. 586

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

which the strangers are believed to bring with them. The whole place, according to the idea of the Indians, has become infected as it were by the new-comers. Besides, the Indians understand that one party of white men is soon followed by another.

It is natural that the Chaco Indians should not care to bestow great labour on dwellings which in all probability will house them only for a short time, or in general, to arrange their life more comfortably in a place which they will probably soon be obliged to desert for ever. Apart from this, the Chaco Indian, who is perfectly suited to his environment, constructs his houses precisely in the way he thinks is most practical and of the material which is most easily obtainable. In the interior parts of the Chaco there are no large trees affording material for the construction of more substantial and durable houses. On the other hand, the scraggy trees and bushes in which the Chaco forests abound and the grassy plains provide building material in abundance, always within reach and excellent for the needs of the Indians. The beehive shaped huts of the primitive Chaco tribes therefore do not, as a certain ethnological school asserts, represent a type of human dwelling essentially characteristic of tribes at the lowest stages of cultural development, but must be wholly explained by the natural conditions. Like the Fuegians, who in their general culture are closely related to the Chaco tribes, the latter are not, on the whole, any lower in the scale of human development than most other tribes in tropical or sub-tropical South America, although nature may allow these to construct habitations of a higher type.

The same reasoning evidently accounts for the fact that the Pilcomayo tribes, although they are dependent on the river and to a great extent subsist by fishing, do not use canoes or craft of any kind. Whereas dug-outs of the kind customary among the South American Indians are commonly used by the Lenguas and other tribes of the river Paraguay, the Choroti, Mataco, Tobas, and Ashluslay have not even thought of constructing such vessels, obviously because the large timber trees from which canoes could be dug out are not obtainable in their country.

I have mentioned that agriculture is only practised by the Chaco tribes on a very limited scale, which of course is due to the dryness of the climate. Among all tribes the land is common property, and within this territory each family has a small plot of land allotted to it, or once taken possession of, which they are supposed to possess as long as they actually cultivate it. Pumpkin, *sandia* (water melon), and beans are the principal crops of the Choroti; maize and manioc are also cultivated, but the drought

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

the Jibaro Indians [1]). But the way of waging wars is about the same among all South American Indians, and in particular, the customs of the Tobas, as far as I know them, substantially agree with, for instance, those of the Lenguas as described by Grubb. As far as the victory feasts are concerned, the customs of the Chaco Indians are not in any way comparable with those of the Jibaros, which stand alone for their richness in complicated rites and ceremonies.

The history of the Tobas shows that they have in former times been a real scourge to the neighbouring tribes, and the white settlers on the Pilcomayo some 30 years ago were constantly in danger of attack. In our days the Tobas have become more stationary and in the same degree more peaceful. The most warlike Toba tribe are the Pilagá in the Argentine Chaco who have waged war particularly against the Ashluslay on the other side of the Pilcomayo with a view to depriving them of the possession of that river.

The most important causes of the wars among the Chaco Indians have been vendetta and trespass upon foreign land. Whereas blood-revenge does not occur within the same tribe, it is commonly enjoined by custom as a duty in the relation of the different tribes to each other. But behind the blood-feuds there are often earlier quarrels, especially about boundaries. In an inhospitable country like Chaco, where agriculture is rendered difficult and game is comparatively scarce, the possession of a river like the Pilcomayo, extremely rich in fish, is naturally of great importance. Many feuds have been fought out between the Chaco tribes for the possession of this river. Both for the sake of the river and for the sake of the pasture necessary for the flocks, the Chaco tribes have fixed limits dividing the territory of one tribe from that of another. These limits are commonly recognized, and trespassing, when it is wilfully done, may become a cause of war. Father Lozano relates that the Tobas living in the region of Tucumán used a kind of boundary mark consisting of long forked poles, and that upon the points of these poles they used to hang the skulls of those who had attempted to enter the territory of others. [2])

Other causes of war among the Chaco tribes are the greed for acquiring the flocks and herds of another tribe and the desire to steal women. How far witchcraft, which has so often given rise to sanguinary feuds among the Indians, has played a part in the wars of the Tobas, I am not able to

[1]) See my *Blood-Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of Ethnology. Bull. 79. 1923).

[2]) Lozano, *op. cit.* I. 99.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M 556

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

M [251]

M 428 ● 768

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

C 577

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

M 177 577

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

to barter with those whom they look upon as their friends and to whom they are paying the visit in question. It is not considered proper that outsiders, be they Indians of other villages or whites, should interfere.

I may add that my own barter with the Indians always had the character of an exchange of presents. When I visited the Indian villages where I was known, I usually received presents of fish, fruits, etc., but it was always understood that these presents should be paid back in some form. Similarly, when I myself gave the Indians presents I usually received something in return, except when the presents — for instance the necessary presents of tobacco — were regarded as a natural tribute wich I had to pay for permission to stay in the village. Everyone who travels among Indians should bear in mind that Indian hospitality always means that something must be given in return, and that the traveller who neglects his duty on this point will necessarily be regarded as greedy.

843 from a certain tuber which has been roasted and then ground in a mortar. The husband unties his belt and undoes the knot in his tie so that the umbilical cord not wrap itself about the child's neck.

844 Only on rare occasions are there any complications at birth. According to the observations of a medical missionary, Doctor Collins Smith, labor lasts about two [sic] hours for the first child and around four or five hours for the others. A delivery often gathers a numerous crowd, and the neighbors take up positions close to the woman who is in labor, without showing any particular interest, but ready to take part should it be necessary to render any assistance. Old women, greatly experienced, come to assist the woman in labor, especially if the delivery is a difficult one. These benevolent matrons [431] usually receive a gift--a goat or a piece of cloth--by way of payment for their trouble.

The pregnant woman who is about to deliver is placed on the thighs of one of these crones, who is seated cross-legged on the ground. She takes hold, with both hands, of a pole which is stuck vertically into the earth in front of her and grips it firmly as the pains become greater. Other informants have told me that women give birth to their babies in a squatting position directly onto the ground; but they confirmed the matter of the use of a rod or pole stuck into the earth. If the labor is difficult or longer than is usual, one of the matrons presses the body of the uterus with her hands as would a doctor wishing to expulse the placenta mechanically. If the woman in labor is unable to keep her sitting position, she lies down in such a manner that one of the helpers may rest her knee against the perineum, while another woman massages her in the uterine region.

Any mishap which may occur in the process is [10] attributed to witchcraft or to the husband's negligence who may have violated one of the numerous "tabus" which he is obliged to observe.

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife. It is never cut before the appearance of the placenta, as a child's life is not complete until his placenta has been expelled. According to one of my informants [752] the navel wound is cauterized with an incandescent pumpkin stalk. If the placenta is long in coming, the women exert upon the abdomen the same type of pressure used to accelerate the baby's birth. The placenta is buried without any kind of ceremony. The umbilical cord is dried and put into a little leather bag in the shape of a rhomboid, which the child carries about his neck until he is ten years old.

/319 cont./

433 222 241 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 578 682 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar, and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 513 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things. They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 515 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 585 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 152 837 593 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless, the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 301 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

stemmed from the desire which the whites have of keeping the Indians from settling and taking possession (a fact recognized by Argentine law) of the excellent land which the local whites look upon as legitimate prey for the future.

They do not indulge in commercial enterprises; and how could they possibly do so when they have no agriculture or industries, being only wanderers and nomads? However, they do practice barter on a small scale, which is their only form of primitive, embryonic commerce. They do not have words for "buying and selling," and in order to express this idea it would seem that they had gone to some of school of economics to learn the exchange formula do ut des, for, strangely enough the Matacos, for example, instead of saying "sell me" say atquiocq niquiocq, which means "give me I give you."

One can gather from this that they have no form of money; but they have invented a word to signify our coins, which is tdócq-kynat among the Matacos and which means hide or skin of metal. Kynat is a generic word which covers all metals which do not exist or circulate in the Chaco. It would appear from this that it is a word invented prior to the appearance of paper money.

Nevertheless there is a sort of medium of exchange, though in only an incipient stage, among the inhabitants of the Chaco. It is a substance which the Indians use to paint themselves with and which is highly valued by them even in the smallest amounts. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra the plant which produces it is called urucú. This paint is obtained by boiling the fruit of the urucú for twenty-four hours, when the coloring matter floats to the top and is collected and made into small pellets of varying sizes. The dye is exuded from the skin of the fruit, which is about the size of an orange. The fruit with a blackist skin produces a black dye, the one with yellow skin gives an orange or red dye and the fruit having a white skin produces a green dye. The skin on the yellow and white varieties is about as thick as the outer covering on a walnut. Each one of the three grows on a different kind of urucú, all of which are plants which grow to be about as tall as a man, with fruit about the size of a pomegranate which split open of their own accord when they are ripe.

Although this substance is produced and made in Bolivia, it is current among all the Chaco Indians and is used by them to

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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The favourit colour of the
Indians is red or vermilion, the paint being obtained from the seeds of the plant *Bixa orellana*. But this beautiful shrub does not grow in the Gran Chaco. The Chaco tribes only obtain the paint they appreciate so much from the Indians in the north by means of intertribal commerce.

The Chaco Indians are also in the habit of blackening the face with soot or charcoal on certain occasions.

The typical way of painting the face both for men and women is either to colour the whole face and forehead red with *urucú*, or black with charcoal, or only to apply red or black spots, lines, small squares etc. to the cheeks, to the nose, round the mouth and above the eyes. The eye, which is the organ of the most important sense and the one most exposed to disorders, is generally painted with special care. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are only drawn along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled out; sometimes protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, especially by the women. Among the *Tobas*, persons of both sexes generally have the face and forehead painted red. But besides this typical facial painting the Toba women — seldom the men — are in the habit of making special patterns or ornaments upon their cheeks on certain occasions. The patterns used by the Tobas seem to be comparatively few in number; we do not find among them the same abundance of designs as for instance among the Choroti and the Ashluslay. Custom does not require that any special kind of pattern should be applied on a particular occasion. Every woman, for instance for a religious dance or feast, paints upon her face what designs she likes and invents at the moment.

If one asks a Toba girl why she paints her face, she will in most cases simply give the answer that it is considered beautiful, sometimes she will say that it is to please and attract the men. When I asked other people about the matter I was told that the Toba girls paint themselves when they particularly desired a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive for thus decorating the face, for facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, on closer inquiry I found that the Toba women are in the habit of painting themselves *at the time of their menses*, in order to have a protective charm against the evil influences of which they especially then stand in fear. The ideas

CM 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

CM 175 72 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

CM 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

CM 175 462 [482]

C M 175 462 [846] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the C M [595] Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances C M 175 [164] towards a Spanish woman. . . .

"Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the C M [764] old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the C M [771] shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- C M 175 756 spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

C M 114 This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 262 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make <u>aloja</u>. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

The women themselves also weave the wool gathered from the few sheep they possess and arrange the natural wool colors in regular patterns of stripes or squares. They do not know how to make more ornamental figures.

In order to weave they stick four forked pieces of wood into the ground in the form of a rectangle, place a pole across each end to which they affix the warp threads and with a wooden blade about a hand breadth long thread and tamp the wool into place.

They call "weaving " potzin; the "loom" noccalĕi, and the "threads" huolĕi. These words, which have not the least affinity with the corresponding Spanish words, assure us that the Indians did not learn weaving from the Spaniards -- not that one should lay great stock either by similarities or by the lack of them in words to buttress a judgment of this nature (on the contrary, it happens that the Mataco always do all they can to keep from adopting foreign words to express new things, preferring to use their own words with small changes) but the fact of the matter is that we are not here confronted by one of these circumlocutions. Another possible cause for error might be found in the great difficulty which they have to pronounce words as we do. Furthermore there is the habit of taking Spanish words and modifying them to suit their own language as when they make from "cabra" [goat--Translator] caila, and from Pedro, Peilŏ.

All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

this shared work has its cause in that the last two mentioned products must necessarily be gathered within a certain limited period and therefore the Indians have need of the combined effort of all the workers they can muster in order to harvest all they possibly can.

For the making of nets they must first, naturally, begin by making twine, which they call niñ'hiôi. They get their textile material from a bromelia which in Quechua is called châguar (a name now also used by the white settlers) and in Mataco hñié. They steep the leaves of this plant in water for a time and then comb them with a clam shell. Once this has been done the residue is put out into the sun to dry and whiten. The last stage is that of twisting the fiber -- a wad of it is held in the left hand and rubbed back and forth [182] on a leg, upon which they sprinkle a little gypsum in order to avoid getting hurt. This gypsum powder is called maccotâc-muc.

The twine being thus ready they make not only nets with it but also ropes, which they call niñ'hioi-less, which means family or skein of threads.

Some of the Indians have special skill in making weapons, and make them as a means of barter with their companions. They use a very hard wood for the bow, and ostrich [rhea--Translator] tendons or strips of hide for the string. The arrow shaft is made of cane, the head of some hard wood, often tipped with bone and barbed like a fish hook.

Chapter V

Marriage Customs

Those who do not know anything about the Indians may believe that they lead morally and materially sterile lives. Yet this is not actually the case: the savage loves, hates and knows what ambition, enjoyments, dangers and glory are. He is acquainted with religion and with fear. In these primitive societies the whole gamut of human affections is experienced precisely "as among the whites," as Faustino used to say to me when I asked him about the intimate experiences of the Indian way of life.

Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception. 462

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chăguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have. 595 422 556

Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families. 586

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Chapter V.

Position of the women. Division of labour.

The influential position of the women among the Chaco Indians has already been touched upon. The facts mentioned as to the »mother-right» prevailing among these Indians, the right of the Choroti and Mataco women to propose marriage, etc. give us to understand that the social position of the Chaco woman is by no means that of an oppressed slave, as it has sometimes been described by superficial observers. Even the Tobas, in spite of comparatively frequent divorce, hold their women in high esteem, as may indeed be inferred from one of their myths about the origin of the women. It is therefore impossible to subscribe to the opinion expressed by Campos with special reference to the Tobas when he says that »the women, as has been stated by all, are the yoke-carriers of the house; they are the slaves and not the comrades of the men». Only a passing traveller, who has not had an opportunity to study the social conditions of the natives properly, can arrive at such an opinion. It is true that matrimonial relations are not as ideal among the Tobas as among the Choroti, where women have the right to choose husbands and wholly dominate the family life. Among the Tobas it may happen — as would never happen among the Choroti — that a husband beats his wife, either because he is bad himself or because she has proved unfaithful and tried his patience too much by her jealousy; but such cases are rather exceptions than the rule; generally the Toba husband treats his wife with kindness and affection.

The division of labour between the sexes prevailing in the Chaco as in other parts of South America, easily gives a superficial observer the impression that the women are treated by the men as inferior and subjugated beings. The home industries, especially spinning, weaving, and pottery-making, are wholly in the hands of the women. They not only have to do

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Toba SI 12

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462 the general domestic work, but in particular to collect and carry home wild roots and fruit from the forest as well as fire-wood and water. Thus every afternoon one can see the women returning home laden with heavy burdens of fuel or of algaroba or other fruits, carried in large net-bags. The hardest workers in all tribes are the older women. At any rate I noticed that the younger married Toba women shunned the heaviest work, for instance the carrying of fuel, leaving this to the older women of the family. As to agriculture, both sexes take part in it, but the men do the rough work, felling the trees and clearing the ground. The domestic animals, that is to say, the goats, sheep and fowls, are left to the care of the women. The men, in addition to the rough work they perform in agriculture, reckon fishing and hunting as their main occupations. the Toba men being also frequently occupied in warfare, which is a real profession among these Indians. The armadillo, which is regarded by the Tobas as a »female» animal, is the only game caught by the women.

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This division of labour is very strictly observed. It is not an accidental institution, nor due to the desire of the men to oppress the weaker members of society and to compel them to do such kinds of work as they do not, for one reason or another, like themselves. It is, as it were, founded upon the nature of things and in some cases connected with the animistic ideas of the natives. A man would be ashamed to do work which according to custom is incumbent on the women, and similarly a woman would seem ridiculous did she perform a man's work. A European who notices for instance a Choroti family when about to move, and sees the wife laden with an enormous burden of things belonging to the family, and perhaps a sucking child in addition, whereas her husband goes free and disengaged, only carriyng his bow and arrows, might easily arrive at the conclusion that the Choroti husband treats his wife like a slave; but the conclusion would nevertheless be wrong. The husband must have his hands free among other things to be able to defend the family with his weapons against venomous snakes or other dangers threatening it on the way, or to hunt. The women themselves look upon this state of things as being perfectly natural.

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The industry which is characteristic of the Indian woman in the Chaco as elsewhere in South America is thus by no means an expression of her inferior social position. The work she does is not compulsory but voluntary and must be wholly explained by the conditions of life which have developed among the Indians. Mr. Grubb, who during his long stay among the Chaco Indians acquired a perfect knowledge of their

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psychology, is quite right when he points out that in reality the men do their fair share of the work, although it is not seen to such advantage as that of the women. Thus fishing and hunting which are the chief occupations of the men are by no means a pastime or recreation, but a serious, onerous, and often dangerous undertaking; and the same of course, in a still higher degree, holds true of warfare.

As to the Toba woman, her independent and influential position appears in its way from the right she possesses to decide about the future husband of her daughter; as we have seen, the mother's consent is particularly required. The women also show their influence when raids against other tribes are planned, exciting the passions and revengefulness of the men. And in all tribes the women serve as permanent and self-elected arbitrators. When quarrels arise at the drinking-feasts, which is not unfrequently the case, and threaten to develop into sanguinary fights, it is the women that allay the agitated feelings and separate the fighters, thus preventing more serious calamities.

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Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

We have already seen that the most appreciated of these drinks is algaroba beer, which by the Mataco and the Choroti is called *atās*, by the Tobas again *maplyí*. The tree itself and its fruit is called *oáh* in the Mataco and the Choroti language, in the Toba language *map*. The sacred beer is prepared with the utmost care and with certain religious or magical ceremonies. At this preparation there appears a strict division of labour between men and women. Although the women are not allowed to drink of the beer, they seemingly perform the larger part of the work. They collect the fruit in the forest, carrying it home in their large caraguatá bags, and afterwards mash it in mortars. Some old women start to chew the fruit, mixing it well with saliva, whereupon they spit it out into a goat's hide, fixed in the ground by means of sticks in such a way that it forms a sort of vessel. The goat's hide is used by the Choroti and by the Argentine Mataco, whereas the Tobas and the Bolivian Mataco use a wooden trough for the purpose. Lastly, hot water is poured over the mashed fruit.

These preparations require nearly a whole day. The most essential thing still remains, namely the fermentation, and to effect this is a duty solely incumbent on the men, since women as a rule do not take part in conjurations. The fermentation is sacred, because it means the birth of the good spirit. Now this happens in the night, but night is the time when evil spirits move about. According to the belief of the Indians, the invisible persecutors appear in great numbers in order to prevent the birth of the good spirit and interfere with the drink so that it cannot ferment and is entirely spoiled. Therefore special precautions must be taken for the critical time. The brewing of the algaroba beer for the great festivals during the algaroba season is — especially among the primitive Choroti — a matter that concerns the whole community. Hence, at the approach of night, the men arrive from all houses with their rattle gourds, sit round the hide or trough, and begin to chant a noisy, monotonous song without words, shaking the rattles in the rhythm of their chant. This ceremony is called by the Choroti *nissammaha oáh*, by the Tobas *niapilák map*, and its most conspicuous object is to prevent the spirits from spoiling the beer. Since the new moon is believed to promote fermentation, a moonlight night is preferably chosen for the ceremony. The chant is typical of the Indian conjurations in the Chaco. It is always begun in a loud voice; then the voice gradually dies down, so that the last tones are only heard as a low and distant muttering. Thereupon they start again from the beginning, and so forth. In addi-

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Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *alaja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *asutshe;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

"moon" (i-que-lacq). In this they agree with the languages of all nations, a thing which is still preserved amongst us in poetic usage, while the common language of prose has undergone such changes with the passage of time that the words no longer appear to have their primitive material significance of sun and moon. M 805

Either by analogy from "moon" to "a light" or vice versa, the fact is that the word for both "moon" and "a light" is the same. M

This is not true of the word for "fire," for to this element special properties are attributed as the Chiriguanos condemn the bodies of those who die in the odor, or rather, taste, of evil, to be burned; and the Tobas and Matacos burn all bodies. This practice among the two latter nations is to be explained by their desire to hasten as much as possible the final condition which will benefit the deceased, that is, that as soon as the fleshy parts are consumed the soul will be able to descend into the earth and be among its companions. C 764

[213] Despite the fact that they are innocent of matches and sulfur, not to mention steel for striking fire, since they have no flint, they can produce fire at will. I have already described the manner in which they do this, by twirling one stick rapidly upon another which is lying on the ground until the sawdust which results -- which looks like finely powdered roasted coffee grounds -- begins to glow. Then they heap a kind of highly combustible wood onto it, blow it until a flame appears and from this they can make as large a fire as they wish. One of the two sticks which they use is from the chilca bush, which is aromatic, resinous and porous and is found in abundance throughout the Argentine Republic. M 372

It is customary to say that each Indian does everything for himself, and that this is the cause for his slowness and backwardness. But this is not so. They may be wanderers, but they do not for this reason refrain from a certain distribution of labor. There are amongst them weapon makers, canoe builders, net makers, weavers, etc., who sell their manufactured goods to their companions and receive others in exchange for them. They have, then, their guilds of arts and skills, but in an embryonic stage, of course. They also have particular terms to express themselves in this field, which in Mataco are formed from the word which indicates an object plus a particle indicative of function. Of these particles)hi M 463 ● M 192 463

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; gúu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something. for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lutek; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-ʾhi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets M 415 which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's M 534 opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M 346 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 313 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./

771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
169 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
177 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
131 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They
197 occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
177 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Choroti SR6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

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In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101

These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197

They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224

Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756]

They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

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Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

CHAPTER I.

My travels in the Gran Chaco.

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In October 1911 I arrived in Buenos Aires by an English steamer, proceeding directly from London, and a few days later continued my journey by railway to my future field of research. The Argentine government, to which I was introduced by the Russian minister in Buenos Aires, Count Maximoff, did everything to facilitate my undertaking and even offered me an escort on my journey to the Indians — an offer which however I was obliged courteously to decline. My nearest goal was the sugar factory of Esperanza, situated about three miles from the small town San Pedro in the province of Jujuy in northern Argentine. At this factory thousands of Indian labourers are employed to cut the sugar cane in the fields surrounding the village. Among these native labourers almost all Chaco tribes are represented — especially the Tobas, the Mataco and the Choroti — and there are instances of Indians arriving from the interior parts of the country where no white man has yet put his foot. Here I had an excellent opportunity of making preliminary acquaintance with the Indian tribes whom I proposed to visit later on in their own land.

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I was received with great kindness and hospitality by the owners of the sugar factory, the great English firm Leach Brothers, who helped me to get into contact with the Indians. At Esperanza I stayed for three weeks, making preparations for my expedition into the Chaco, so that it was not until in the middle of November that I could set out upon my journey. From San Pedro de Jujuy it is only a few hours railway journey to Embarcación, which at that time was the last station towards the north. From there on one could only travel on mule-back along the road which from Embarcación goes to southern Bolivia. Messrs. Leach had helped me to buy the mules at Esperanza and also got two peons to accompany me at least on the first part of my expedition.

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Choroti SK6

Indian tribe. For myself I have regarded them mainly from the point of view of the ethnologist and social psychologist, and cannot help holding a somewhat different opinion on the subject. The state of things which Mr. Grubb found among the Lenguas, it should be noted, is in the main the same as among all Chaco tribes. Mr. Grubb disregards the fact that what he calls Indian socialism, with the solidarity and social sympathy which it involves, is not accidental but the natural outcome of evolution and the circumstances under which the Chaco Indians have lived for centuries. It is not only a natural system but also a useful system, having been developed according to the Darwinian law that in a hard struggle for existence such societies have the best chance to survive in which the sympathetic feelings are strongest. In fact, nowhere is mutual aid more necessary than among the half-nomadic Chaco tribes, who are able to practise agriculture only to a small extent and who, as pointed out before, at certain times of the year have to struggle hard to support life. Lacking these social feelings, I believe, many of the smaller tribes, for instance the Choroti, would have perished long ago. Besides, the very history of the Chaco Indians proves that they have been driven into these inhospitable regions by forces over which they had no control, the most important being the pressure of superior peoples. Pressed from behind and meeting resistance from those already occupying these lands they were compelled to fight for their very existence. These facts of the historic past of the Chaco Indians account for the warlike character of many of them, but also for their strong social instincts.

Social sympathy is developed strongest among low tribes such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, but also manifests itself among the Tobas and the Mataco. What Mr. Grubb says with special reference to the Lenguas, that »the apparent hospitality is given grudgingly, though ostensibly with a good grace», does not at any rate hold true of the *Choroti*. I have mentioned before that bargaining in every form is unknown to the Choroti, and this is due simply to the fact that they regard themselves as being socially so intimately united that property and the products of labour are practically common to all. When a party of Choroti men return from fishing they always distribute the catch in the village so that every family has its share, and if one asks a Choroti why he does so, his only answer is generally: *etsīni*, *i.e.* »they are my brothers». »We are all brothers», is the principal tenet of their social morality There is an unwritten native law which states that no single family or individual shall suffer want as long as there are others who possess food. This system is looked

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upon as perfectly natural, and since full reciprocity exists, such an act of apparent liberality does not even evoke feelings of gratitude in those who for the moment are the objects of it. Those who have been travelling and therefore have not produced crops, or those who for some other reason have no means of subsistence for the time being, have a claim on the hospitality of their fellow-tribesmen. Even when there is nowhere a real want the successful hunter or fisher gladly shares his abundance of food with other families of the village, knowing that others will do the same to him on another occasion.

Native law enjoins hospitality not only to fellow-tribesmen but also to members of foreign tribes with which the Indians stand on a friendly footing. The same hospitality and liberality is shown to a white man whom the Indians regard as their friend. For my own part I frequently had, both among the Tobas and the Choroti, personal experience of this Indian hospitality.

In spite of the liberality which appears in the relations of the different members of the community to one another, private property is strictly respected in all the tribes. We can particularly speak of »socialism» in regard to the *land*, which, as I have mentioned before, is considered to belong to the people in general; no Indian, not even a chief, has a direct claim to any part of it above his fellows. The flocks of sheep and goats feed on the common pasture. Similarly the natural products of the country, such as game, fish, wild fruit, honey, and fire-wood, are common property. But as soon as an individual family has taken possession of a piece of this common land for cultivation, its ownership is acknowledged and respected as long as the family actually cultivates it. What the Indian collects of the natural products of the country and what he produces or acquires through his own work — such as clothes, ornaments, weapons and implements, magical instruments, etc. — is also regarded as his exclusive property, although, as soon as food is in question, an unwritten moral law and social sympathy largely induces the individual owner to share it with others. The flocks of course also belong to individual families. The sheep and goats always wear property marks, so that when they are taken home from the pasture in the afternoon the Indians can easily determine who is the owner of each animal.

The lower Chaco tribes, particularly the Choroti and the Ashluslay, do not know of any distinctions between rich and poor, and even among the Tobas it is a comparatively rare thing that a man possesses more than his fellows. Only a few great chiefs who have made successful wars against

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583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter
[606] of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 72 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

582 "Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

585 591 "The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

595 586 "Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about. Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of [684] the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

843 846 "When pregnant the woman is not given the least consideration. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

854 "The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children. While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country- [482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one [553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

647 "Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

Those pots which are used to contain water have an indented waistline around which a rope may be passed when they need to be transported. This rope, running around the jar, is slipped over the carrier's forehead and the vessel is carried on his back, to which effect he must bend back and neck forward. This manner of transportation is no where near as graceful as that of carrying jars on the head as our country women do, and rather makes the Indian women look like beasts of burden -- however, it may well be a more hygienic way and is, in any case, more practical when traveling along half choked forest paths.

They have no knowledge of, and do not practice, agriculture; yet they do sometimes plant corn (which, as is well known, originated in America) and also pumpkins. When they think it is time to go and eat the crop, they harvest it. They do not grind the corn, but boil it and the pumpkins also while they are yet green -- a harvest, then, is gathered in piece meal and lasts quite a long time. In order to sow they make use of a hard wood spade in the form of a small oar, or a large spear head; the husband makes a hole in the earth, his squaw throws in the seed, covers it, and that is all. The seed is sown in a recently burned off, damp field, that is, one which has just been rained on.

The crop is owned communally by all, but they are nigardly with it concerning outsiders. While we were on the ship, most of our food having run out, we hungered for fresh provisions and vegetables, for we had been without them for more than three months. When the Indians made us a present of pumpkins and ears of corn we were more than delighted. These Indians were friendly, but later on their friendliness proved false for they killed our interpreter. The sailors managed to discover the location of the pumpkin patch and corn field and raided them by stealth. On the following day, when they returned to the cultivated plots they found that everything had been destroyed and not a single growing plant was left. We were never able to find even one of the Indians.

It seems, also, that the whites do not want the Indians to take up agriculture. I was told that the white settlers once [215] came upon a number of fields sown by friendly frontier Indians, and destroyed them so completely that the discouraged Indians had never again planted so much as a handbreadth of land. This action

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyl*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 178 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [799] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

C 648 least with the Mataco. The Choroti also very much fear the powerful and ferocious Tobas and do not like to pass through their country.

M 114 Having finished my studies of the Choroti Indians, I left at the beginning of April for Yacuiba to prepare for my next Chaco expedition, when I proposed to visit the Tobas. Since I could not cross the river which was still swollen by the rains, I decided to return to Yacuiba through the village of Villa Montes (Mission of San Francisco), situated about thirty leagues to the north of d'Orbigny, on the bank of the Pilcomayo. From this village it is a journey of nearly three days to Yacuiba. A narrow riding-path, which in the main follows the course of the river, takes the traveller up to Villa Montes through the dense forests bordering the banks of the Pilcomayo in this region. The typical Chaco scenery disappears as one approaches the cordilleras. The village itself is situated on the very border of the Chaco, at the point where the Pilcomayo leaves the mountains.

M 114 A journey like this is very difficult and even dangerous during the rainy season. In many places the primitive riding-path had been completely destroyed by the strong current of the swollen river. Every ● 484 now and then large pieces of the river bank were detached and plunged into the water with a tremendous rumble, carrying with them giant trees and bushes. In such places the traveller had to cut a new path through the thickets of the virgin forest for himself and his horse, which of course was often connected with great difficulties. It is easy to understand that in this way the Pilcomayo has undergone considerable changes in the course of time. As is shown by old river-beds, the river has several times even taken another course.

T 114 These regions are inhabited mainly by Toba Indians, and on my journey to Villa Montes I passed through some of their villages. Since these Tobas are comparatively easy of access, I decided to stay among them on my second Chaco expedition.

In Yacuiba I was obliged to stay for more than one month, so it was not until the middle of May that I could again leave for the Chaco. Passing through the little village of Caiza to Villa Montes, which became my head-quarters for the next six months, I settled in a Toba village about eight leagues to the south of this place, visiting later on the more distant Toba tribes. Although the Tobas have had a bad reputation — among other things these savages killed the explorer Crevaux — I was received by them in quite a friendly manner. In regard to the language, I had in the beginning the same difficulties as among the Choroti. The two

In order to gather together in a common place, in addition to the tracks they leave they twist branches and handsful of grass at crossroads in order that their companions may know where to find them, they having prearranged the meaning of the signs. 487 201

[193] Another means of communication is by making fires. During our traveling about the Chaco we were continually surrounded by fires, either at close quarters or far away, fires which sometimes took on the proportions of colossal blazes. And often, when we thought that we were in absolute solitude, it would happen that upon approaching an Indian village we would be informed that we were expected, and we would hear tell of the order which had been observed in our march. Dur-202

They make use, moreover, of many spies and informers. In Mataco the former are called niguaiecque, and the latter gu'éicáss. 701 [203]

They apparently do have some sort of tactical organization: thus they have a general chief, subordinate chief and petty chieftains. The first is called, in Mataco, canniat tizán, the second, canniat, and as for the last, I have forgotten.

The general chiefs are chosen at second remove, that is, from among the subordinate chiefs, who, in turn, are elected by the people. Normally a marked preference is shown for the late chief's sons, provided they be of age, courageous and good. But then, of course, we must say that in these elections the same passions are present which appear amongst us in our elections.

They also have another category of persons, whom they call nyát and corresponds vaguely to the Spanish "caballero" or the "galantuomo" of southern Italy. So it is that they refer to any white persons whom they consider of quality with the name nyát. It is to be supposed that a like distinction is made among the other Indians. In Perú and wherever the Quechua language is spoken, gentlemen are called Viracocha. [554] [609]

Once the general chief has been elected the subordinate elector chiefs go to call on him when they can, which visits are celebrated with the accustomed drinking and eating orgies. A general chieftainship almost always embraces villages far removed from each other.

The Matacos call those who visit them tzicki-ác.

The authorities among the Chaco Indians play an almost purely military role. In peace time they lose practically all their prestige,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

114 time of my stay in Yacuiba conditions were much improved, and the village has since made considerable progress, chiefly owing to some foreign commercial houses which have established themselves there. Yacuiba has now several hundred inhabitants, among whom there is a small number of Europeans. The village became my head-quarters for the whole time that I travelled in the Chaco. One of the foreigners, Don Carlos Holzer, did me great service in helping me to get peons and to prepare for my expeditions into different parts of the country.

114 There are two roads leading from Yacuiba to the river Pilcomayo; the one, passing through the village of Caiza, takes the traveller to the small
●491 place called Crevaux; the other leading directly along the line at the 22nd degree of latitude to the Bolivian fort d'Orbigny. Both these places are situated close to the river, the former a few leagues to the north of the latter. On my first expedition to the Pilcomayo in November 1911 I took the second road, the one leading to d'Orbigny. From Yacuiba this place can be reached in three days, travelling on horseback. In addition to the riding-mules I had three baggage mules and was accompanied by two peons none of whom had been at the Pilcomayo before. These regions are entirely uninhabited; there are neither settlers nor Indian villages.
[133] The way goes partly through deep forests, partly through arid deserts and — near the river — through grassy plains. The right (Argentine) bank of the Pilcomayo is extremely flat; it is difficult to imagine more monotonous scenery.

114 At d'Orbigny a small body of ten Bolivian soldiers commanded by a lieutenant was garrisoned and I had counted on their assistance at the crossing of the Pilcomayo, which in the rainy season is very broad and rapid. The fort, however, turned out to be situated on the opposite side of the river and was not even visible from the spot where we were. No human being could be seen on whom it would have been possible to call for assistance. At last we caught sight of two Indians who had swum over the river from the opposite bank evidently for the sake of fishing on the Argentine side where the water is lower. They were Toba Indians who knew enough Spanish to inform us that there was absolutely no canoe to be had either on this or the other side of the river, and that all must cross it by swimming, even the mules. Since the Pilcomayo at this place has a breadth of nearly one mile, it seemed by no means a trifle to cross it with the baggage and the mules. Happily the rainy season had not yet properly begun, so the river was comparatively low. The Indians offered to help us take over the beasts and for this purpose went in search

CM 175 411 [121] from the body without making the wound much longer because a barb is carved into it and this impedes its being drawn out. If they have time they invariably decapitate those of their enemies whom they wound in battle, and they do this with great dexterity as they find the joint between the vertebrae in a moment and sever the head with one slash of their knives made from the jawbone of the "palometa" [a vicious type of fish which also goes by the name of "piraña"--Translator]. After the head has been severed the scalp is removed and then stretched and dried, and kept in order to celebrate their more important fiestas and to demonstrate their bravery.

CM 175 492 "They used, in the old days, to go about on foot, but they have since become great horsemen having stolen large numbers of horses from the ranches and towns of the Spaniards. From the city of Santa Fé alone and in the space of only 20 years they have made off with some 15,000 horses. That is why they are such good riders today, surpassing the Spaniards. Running after a fleeing horse and using only their lances to help them off the ground they will leap upon it and mount either from the side or from behind. They do not use stirrups and their saddles are very meager affairs, so much so that they often ride saddleless, but so swiftly that only rarely can the Spanish overtake them for they make their horses fly by whipping them with a three tailed lash which they always carry with them. When on the warpath they are happy with but skimpy rations which each carries for himself, and they make fun of the many preparations which the Spaniards make since they, with a small amount of half-grilled meat and whatever they can glean from the countryside in the way of fruit or other things undertake treks of a hundred leagues to wage war, their bed being the hard ground or at most a stiff cowhide. But this is nothing unusual for them since their beds are hardly of better stuff when they are at home.

CM 175 513 554 "These latter are made of straw which is spread all over the floor of their habitation which, although low-ceilinged, is very long in order to allow room for the whole family group to stretch out, each family having its own fire in the center. The oldest lies down [576] at the head in the place of greatest prestige and then, on either side, his sons according to age, followed by the grandchildren and other descendents, each with their families in such a manner that the way in which they lie down to sleep is a living representation of the family tree. They have no covering other than the branches and grasses with which they thatch their hovels, and in which a fire burns continually.

The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

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which the strangers are believed to bring with them. The whole place, according to the idea of the Indians, has become infected as it were by the new-comers. Besides, the Indians understand that one party of white men is soon followed by another.

It is natural that the Chaco Indians should not care to bestow great labour on dwellings which in all probability will house them only for a short time, or in general, to arrange their life more comfortably in a place which they will probably soon be obliged to desert for ever. Apart from this, the Chaco Indian, who is perfectly suited to his environment, constructs his houses precisely in the way he thinks is most practical and of the material which is most easily obtainable. In the interior parts of the Chaco there are no large trees affording material for the construction of more substantial and durable houses. On the other hand, the scraggy trees and bushes in which the Chaco forests abound and the grassy plains provide building material in abundance, always within reach and excellent for the needs of the Indians. The beehive shaped huts of the primitive Chaco tribes therefore do not, as a certain ethnological school asserts, represent a type of human dwelling essentially characteristic of tribes at the lowest stages of cultural development, but must be wholly explained by the natural conditions. Like the Fuegians, who in their general culture are closely related to the Chaco tribes, the latter are not, on the whole, any lower in the scale of human development than most other tribes in tropical or sub-tropical South America, although nature may allow these to construct habitations of a higher type.

The same reasoning evidently accounts for the fact that the Pilcomayo tribes, although they are dependent on the river and to a great extent subsist by fishing, do not use canoes or craft of any kind. Whereas »dug-outs» of the kind customary among the South American Indians are commonly used by the Lenguas and other tribes of the river Paraguay, the Choroti, Mataco, Tobas, and Ashluslay have not even thought of constructing such vessels, obviously because the large timber trees from which canoes could be dug out are not obtainable in their country.

I have mentioned that agriculture is only practised by the Chaco tribes on a very limited scale, which of course is due to the dryness of the climate. Among all tribes the land is common property, and within this territory each family has a small plot of land allotted to it, or once taken possession of, which they are supposed to possess as long as they actually cultivate it. Pumpkin, *santia* (water melon), and beans are the principal crops of the Choroti; maize and manioc are also cultivated, but the drought

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342 stick them into the earth in a sloppy circle, tie the ends together with any old thing, place a little straw on top and there they have a house with the appearance of an upturned funnel. And in there do
342 these privileged beings live, with more peace and tranquility than
● 513 kings in their sumptuous palaces; there do they build their fires and eat; there do the men and women sleep, with their parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and always in the company of a few dogs, on the bare ground or on a piece of reed matting, or on the skin of some wild pig they have killed, or cow they have stolen, all together in a jumble—this one with his head on his neighbor's chest, that one with his legs on some other's chest and the dogs on top of anyone who strikes them as comfortable. In this way their miserable
361 hovels soon swarm with insects and then they set fire to them and build others somewhere else—so they are forever moving into [602] new houses because those they construct are only makeshift. Furthermore they tend not to live in the same hut for long because of their habits of spending seasons now in one place now in another, according to the weather and time of year as for example: during the season of good fishing they spend weeks and months shifting continually from one section of the river to another, from the river to some stream, from the stream to some lake; in the fruit season they do the same thing."

"And so, as they are little inclined to bathing and always go
515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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[152]

in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
● 513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

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515 about dirty, and sleep piled up on each other together with their dogs,
164 they are almost always full of mange, a disease which even kills many infants. Many of them, if it should fall that they take a bath, take pleasure, while still wet, in rolling about on the river sand or in the ashes which are in their huts, as do certain animals which seem to require filth. On certain days and in certain seasons they blacken
302 their chests and faces with charcoal in order to appear more handsome or to show that they are celebrating some occasion."

"All of them cut their hair with a knife or with the teeth of fish, this for lack of scissors, which implement would have only a
[304] limited utility among them anyway. They also customarily pierce their ears, in order to insert a piece of stick or something as a fine ornament. The men pluck out with their nails the few hairs which grow on their faces, and some also pull out their eyelashes and eyebrows."

"Both men and women dress very simply, that is, they tie to
291 their waists a piece of any old thing, such as a piece of hide or cloth

take pains to comb themselves, particularly the women. I remember an occasion when I wished very much to obtain a paddle, made of "palo-fierro" [iron-wood--Translator] and having two blades, the blades ending in long, narrow points. It belonged to an Indian friend of mine who had quite a beautiful wife. I offered him a comb in exchange for the double paddle, but after having considered the matter for a while he refused to make the exchange. His wife seemed to me to be very sorry that the deal had not come off, and she must have made use of all her wiles for on the following day her husband spontaneously came [176] and proposed that we make the exchange. It may be that the reader would have thought better of my being a little more generous, but let it be remembered that if I had given my comb away I would not then have been able to obtain the paddle, which was of more interest to me than the Adamic Indian couple.

What I have said of the Matacos can also be said of the Tobas, with this addition, that the Tobas are taller than the former Indians and generally show a larger expanse of forehead -- I do not know if they are actually broader -- owing to their habit of tying their hair up with a band. This information is true also of the Mocovíes and Chulupíes, all of whom inhabit the Argentine Gran Chaco, to the north of which, in the Bolivian Chaco, live the Chiriguanos and Cirionoses.

Among all these Indians the skin color varies between that of new copper and mud, there being also, here and there, some with blackish markings or blemishes.

Chapter III

Some Ethnic Characteristics

It is customary to say that these Indians are extremely dirty, but I have some very serious doubts in that regard, for I have seen them, in the summer time, run into the river for pleasure's sake at certain fixed hours of the day in great numbers, both men and women, each sex in its own determined place. This would appear to be a custom and not a mere whim. In addition to this they often go into the water to fish. It is true that they seem to be dirty, mostly because of their

skin color, and also because of the scratches which become caked, and 515
because of the sun's burning which wrinkles the almost scorched skin, especially on their shoulders; and finally because they go about barefoot and naked in the mud, through the underbrush and bushes, and as they lie down on the bare earth it is only natural that they should be covered with dust, just as we, who wash a thousand times a day do a thousand times become dirty again. They are not -- pardon the expression -- grubby, and I firmly contend that they are not dirty by nature.

An Indian camp is composed of an undetermined number of 342 [361]
dwellings, made by sticking branches into the ground and tying them together on top in the form of a cupola. Onto this frame they throw quantities of straw until it looks like, not a hut, but a wagon so loaded with hay as to cover the very wheels.

They hurl the straw from quite some distance and yet so accurately as to cause wonder, so much the more as it is the women who do this work. A hut, once finished, is so strongly constructed that a man can stand and move about upon it, and it is quite waterproof.

[177] Each chief has his own group of huts, like so many barracks, and sometimes, especially on the occasion of a declaration of war, [622]
many chiefs gather.

The huts are usually so low-ceilinged that one cannot stand up inside, but they vary as to length according to the rank of the family and the number of families which live in them. The long huts are somewhat humped, with two or more doors. The entrance ways are usually protected, on the windy side of the hut, by a fixed windbreak -- one must stoop in order to be able to enter.

A hut is divided into the following parts: the kitchens and the sections where sleeping, sitting, working etc. is carried on; however, there is no material separation between these parts.

The kitchen is nothing more than a swept space on which a fire [354]
is lighted, but only when the weather is cold or when the family mother [765]
is in mourning, during which time she does not leave the hut for a year, or allow herself to be seen, nor does she speak except when strictly necessary. The usual thing is to cook food outside near the entrance. There are as many kitchens as there are families.

The bedroom consists of that portion of the hut where they 352
place skins and clothes, if they have any, upon which they lie and which they put on when they go out if it is cold. On the walls at the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 7

In disposition the three tribes show great differences. The *Choroti* are pleasant and cheerful, and display to a high degree that humorous spirit which is often characteristic of the Indian even when he looks serious. They are lazy and carefree and love amusement, feasting, dancing, and games above everything. When the Choroti Indian has plenty of food and algaroba beer for the moment, he makes merry and eats and drinks as much as he can, but has no thought for the morrow and does not store provisions like the more advanced Chaco tribes. This particularly holds true of the men; the women, who in general are more industrious, show more forethought in this respect, collecting wild fruits in great quantities when they are in season, and keeping the seed-corn till the following sowing. But on the whole poverty is an outstanding feature of the material culture of the Choroti, and this is no doubt due to a great extent to their own character.

The Choroti are — at least nowadays — a peaceful people, and in the insignificant wars they have sometimes waged with the Mataco on the other side of the river, they have manifested very little organization or discipline. As I was told by settlers on the Pilcomayo, the Choroti were formerly more warlike, and like other Chaco tribes, they were even in the habit of scalping those enemies whom they killed during their raids.

The *Mataco*, although anthropologically closely related to the Choroti differ from them considerably in character. The Mataco Indian is serious, taciturn, and gloomy, and in consequence more addicted to religion and superstition than his brother the Choroti Indian. At least nowadays, when the Indians are strongly influenced by European civilization, the Mataco Indian will not make a reliable servant and companion. Cleanliness is not a particular characteristic of the Choroti, but the Mataco are probably the dirtiest of all Chaco tribes. This too may in part be a consequence of their contact with the whites. On the other hand, the Mataco are more industrious and energetic than the Choroti, and accordingly, in their wars, have proved more valiant and capable of more organization than their primitive neighbours. In these respects the Mataco, at any rate the Bolivian tribes, resemble their neighbours the Tobas more than the Choroti.

As to the *Tobas*, their moral qualities and disposition have been described with much unanimity by many travellers. Nearly all have characterized them as bad, ferocious, treacherous, thievish, etc., qualities which they have especially displayed towards the whites. Typical on

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

primitiveness more accentuated than that of other tribes. They are among the dirtiest peoples of South America, and in the sense of cleanliness they are inferior to the Toba. 181 [515]

Matako material culture does not differ markedly from that of any of the other Chaco tribes. Their weapons are the same, their houses of the common beehive type, and their craftsmanship is hardly distinguishable from that of their neighbors. Judged outwardly, the Matako might be confused with the mass of Chaco cultures. A keen observer notices a slight superiority in the agriculture of the Matako,as compared with the Toba. The distinctive character of Matako culture may only be appreciated in contrast with that of the Toba-Pilagá. While the Matako are generally peaceful the Toba are warlike and have almost always been the conquerors in the far distant regions. However, it cannot be said that the Matako have not also fought bravely against their enemies or that they are lacking in military tradition. Still the contrast between them is striking even to an observer like myself who has spent only a short time among these Indians. The difference between these apparently identical cultures lies primarily in the stressing of religion and magic among the Matako in contrast with the relative unimportance of like interests among the Toba. Although built on the same pattern as that of the Toba, the culture of the Matako is interwoven with ceremonial activities, ritual dances, and expulsion of spirits. It is almost impossible to stay with a group of Matako more than one day without having the opportunity to attend some ceremony. The traditional blowing of medicine-men upon the sick occurs among the Matako as among other Chaco tribes. It is always associated with dances together with spells of magic and has rarely the individual character of the same ceremony among the Toba. Not only are the peformances of Matako medicine-men more impressive than those of other tribes in the same area, the external appearance of the medicine-man and his assistants denotes the great importance given to ritual details and 171 105

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
● 515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

On seeing this couple, almost in a state of stark nakedness, seated on a bench among the cylinders and pistons of the engine, motionless for hours, we were necessarily reminded of the earthly paradise.

When among strangers the women are quiet and impassive, but when left to themselves they are full of fun and as playful as children. And this is generally the Indians' character.

The women take up a somewhat strange posture with their hands when they are standing. As they have no pockets to put them in, or fan with which to occupy them, or what have you, they place them upon their breasts which serve as supports for their arms which together rest upon them.

It would seem that such a habit would enlarge the breasts, but this is not so. The breasts are broad, it is true, but short and erect while the women are young. After expertoe yirum, and having given suck to one or more children, the breasts shrivel and retract in a very unaesthetic manner, to tell the truth. It is to be noted that both men and women age early there, and also die early, and to this must be attributed the fact that there are few gray hairs even when there are faces and bodies so wrinkled as to make one believe that their owners must be as old as Methuselah.

I have gone into some detail in this matter of the breasts because it is known that in other regions, according to what is said, the women, when they give suck, give the nipple over the shoulder to the child which they are carrying on their backs. The fact is that no such thing occurs here.

The women, along with the men, have abundant, coarse, straight hair. They wear it rather long but not as long as they might, for it is shortened by wearing it in an unkempt fashion (which serves them as protection for eyes and forehead against the sun) and also by cutting.

They cut their hair, that on their faces as well as that on their scalps, with the jaw of a fish called palometa, which is armed with extraordinarily sharp teeth placed in two rows. The upper teeth dovetail exactly with the lower.

The palometa, the raya (ray--Translator) and the yacaré (alligator--Translator) are the scourge of those who bathe in this river and the lakes or pools which are fed by it. The palometa snaps, tears

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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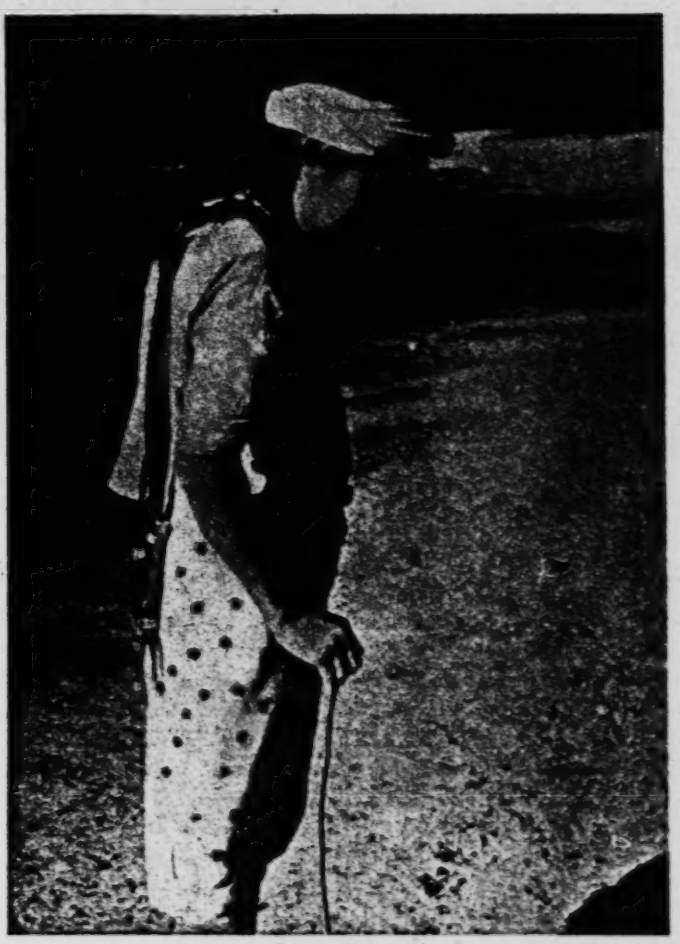

Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *caraguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

[222]
[415]

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Mataco SI7

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●516
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Fig. 66. A. Mataco-Vejos woman impressing a finger-print ornament on the rim of an earthenware vessel.

downcast and dejected. Faustino whispered to me: "Say a-aiss to her, with feeling." I said softly into her ear: "a-aiss," and the Indian 832
beauty in spite of herself broke into an imperceptible smile for I had said to her: "You are very pretty!!" On another occasion I had gone to an encampment to witness the treatment given to an invalid by the Indian doctors; there was there also a young girl, the prettiest Indian girl I have as yet seen.

A lieutenant joined us and said to me out loud "What a good looking girl!" "Yes indeed" I replied. And the girl, back there in the shadows said: "Teniente toj tzi-la-taj" which means "the lieutenant is very handsome" -- but she said it in such a charming way, half ingenuous and half malicious, hiding her face behind the back of another person who was there and flashing at the same time such a meaningful glance that I really envied the handsome lieutenant.

Following is a transcription of a conversation between two young 521 ●
people:

He: "Who can that pretty one be whom I am liking so much?"
She: "Who can that good-looking one be whom I am loving so much?"
(This is a sort of endearing refrain which they apparently use a great deal) -- Then, coming close to each other:
He: "Every time I see you I feel a desire to carry you off -- who knows but that some day you will lie in my arms."
She: Who knows -- as we walk we make progress."
He: "If you love me let me caress you."
She: "You must not do so even if you love me, for you belong to another."
He: "There is no one who can reproach me. I am single, and if I were not single I would not speak to you like this -- Goodbye! I am leaving tomorrow; I shall be absent for two years..."
She: "Oh...I am so sorry! I shall miss you if you leave..."
He: "Don't marry anyone else while I am away...I shall bring you a necklace, a kerchief to cover yourself, needles and thread... Goodbye!" [186]
She: "Goodbye...come back soon."

I refrain from transcribing the Mataco version for fear of boring the reader. But tell me if in this dialogue which I have here set down the same feelings and expressions cannot be found which are common with us.

in making aloja. The chañar ripens before the other two mentioned above and is a sweetish, round, rather small yellow fruit with a stone, which is eaten either raw or cooked. From this fruit arrope is made, which is good tasting and has, in local opinion, medicinal qualities for the treatment of coughs and asthma. The chañar tree, while it is young, has leaves and trunk similar to the tamarind; the branches look like those of the eucalyptus. 824

Shortly after the algarrobo pods comes the mistol which is similar to our azufaifo except for this difference: from a mixture of its fruits with algarrobo pod flower, patay is made, and kept in skins and well kneaded. Together with these fruits, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later, all the other fruits ripen -- in the Chaco in the hottest months which are October and December (spring and summer months) and further south, towards Tucumán, in November and February.

Through certain techniques of preservation the Indians are able to prolong the yearly period during which they can feed on this vegetable diet, particularly if the crop has been a good one. The harvest lasts between four and five months and is a time of carnival for the Indians [189]. 251

To preserve the algarrobo pods they build small huts which they place on four posts in order to supply them with proper ventilation and to keep them free of ants and other insects. It is a pleasure to see these little constructions rising above the Indians' huts in the same manner as do our towers. Each camp takes pleasure in having more of these little granaries than do its neighbors. In the same manner do they keep vinal and some roots and fruits which can and should be cooked when dry. 343

When the aloja is ready, which is usually at eleven in the morning, all the men gather about the yuchan container, seated in the Moorish fashion. Then, with two or three long-handled dry gourds they dip out the liquid and pass it around to each other. Meanwhile they talk about their affairs: about wars, the crops, news, odd bits of scandal, and guffaw at any strange happening or quid pro quo. Thus they continue for three, four or more hours. When the liquor is finished they fall upon the solid matter remaining. The women and children take no part in any of this. 273 [521]

They set a high value on the algarrobo pod. A famous chief, whom the whites called Granadero (Grenadier guard -- Translator) 824

Chiriguano SF1D

C 766

The bodies of those who have been executed for repeated murder are flung out on the ground or else burned.

Some Indians, among them the Chirionoses (1) who live on

1. Tribes of the Chiriguano type. (Ed.)

the Bolivian or Brazilian frontiers, bury their dead in the trunks of trees. To this end they go into the thickest parts of the forest, choose out a yuchan tree, which has a bottle shaped trunk and is as soft as cork, fell it and place the corpse inside it, covering it over well to keep the crows from getting at it. When the Fort Sarmiento road was opened up a short time ago one of these burial trees was found, quite by chance.

M 764

The Matacos make a practice of burying their dead under ground, although some tribes, those towards the east who live close to the Tobas, burn them. This practice, one would suppose, is one which they have in common with the Tobas.

It is to be supposed that the beliefs held by the Matacos in this matter of interment are also held by the other wild Indians with whom they are continually in fighting contact, either as allies or as enemies, and with whom they share the same spirit cult.

M 775

Now the Matacos, as has been said, believe that the soul of the dead has no rest until the body has been buried within tribal territory. I have no reason to believe that an exception is made for those who die in battle. They believe also that the soul, which they call "hésék" (they give the name of "tzan" to the body, and "hót" to a corpse) does not descend into the earth to be with its companions until the body has decomposed, either by rot or by fire. They say that until this happens the soul wanders about around the family hut, sometimes becoming visible and complaining about its lot.

M 521

This business of the appearance of souls (or ghosts) and their cries of lamentation is the subject of a great deal of foolish old wives' tales among them, almost to the point of their not talking about anything else, and I would wager that it is the cause of as much fright among them as it is amongst us.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

Chapter XIX.

Ceremonial games.

During my stay among the Choroti my attention was drawn to a curious game which was played in all villages in the month of March and evidently had some mystic meaning. The game later on turned out to be »international» in the Chaco, most tribes knowing it and playing it in somewhat different forms. The Choroti call it *syuke*, the Tobas *soka*, the Ashluslay *syúkak*, etc., names which are evidently nothing but different corruptions of the Quichua word *chunca*, ten. Similarly the playing terms in the Chaco are as it were international and of Quichua origin, a fact which seems to support the assumption that at any rate the principal ideas underlying the game have been borrowed from the Quichua Indians.

I have only studied this game among the *Choroti* and the description I shall give of it in the following pages refers merely to the variety of the game existing among these Indians.[1])

The dice consist of four pieces of wood, which are on one side convex, on the other side quite flat. The convex side is often ornamented with certain incised figures. (See fig. 10, a.)

The player takes two dice in each hand, throws them up smoothly against each other and allows them to fall on the ground. The position taken by the dice on the ground determines the value of the cast. The points are reckoned in the following way:

[1]) Nordenskiöld described this game in 1910 in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, but its magical or religious significance — which, of course gives it its particular interest — has entirely escaped him. This may in part be due to the fact that Nordenskiöld never saw the game played at the proper season, the beginning of the »winter», but arranged playing-parties at an other season to learn how it was played. On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that many ceremonies, which are in their character magical or religious, have been misunderstood by ethnologists and regarded as purely profane entertainments.

M 524 177

C 524

M [114]

[p. 201]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 524 789

hard for existence. Now the game is supposed to have the effect of *increasing the fruit and making the Indians rich*. This is made possible by virtue of the fact that *among the Indians there is always someone who wins*», from whose luck all will benefit. The Indians believe that just as they can influence the course of nature, »hurry on» the growth of the crops, by beating drums, dancing, and shaking rattles, so they believe that at this critical period they can enhance the vegetative power of the useful trees and prevent starving by playing *shuke*. It seems to me probable that in this game the magical effects are produced merely by the procedure of playing — by the feverish pace at which the game goes on, and so forth — just as technique and the very rhythm play an essential part in such magical ceremonies as dancing and the beating of drums.

M 524 177 114

That the *shuke* game, so far as its principal features are concerned, has been borrowed by the Choroti from the mountain Indians, as has been suggested even by Nordenskiöld, is a matter beyond doubt and may be inferred from the playing terms themselves which are of Quichua origin (*shuke* = *chunca*, *taura*, and probably *kima*). On the other hand, it is certain that the Incas never had an exactly similar game, and Nordenskiöld's imagination carries him too far when he tries to show that certain objects, found in archeological excavations on the mountain area of Ecuador, are nothing but counting-boards which have been used for a game more or less identical with the *shuke*. [1]) Nordenskiöld's curious idea of connecting the said mysterious objects with the *shuke* game of the Chaco Indians entirely loses its importance in the face of the fact that, as I have shown elsewhere [2]), the ancient Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians had several »games of chance», none of which bore the slightest resemblance to the Chaco game just mentioned. The map published by the same ethnographer, showing the supposed distribution of »games of chance» in South America, was therefore decidedly prematurely drawn. [3]) The particular character of the Chaco game has obviously, in

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[1]) See his article »Spieltische aus Peru und Ecuador», in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Heft 2 u. 3. 1918, p. 169.

[2]) See my *Ceremonial Games of the South American Indians* (*Societas Scientiarum Fennica. Commentationes humanarum litterarum*, Helsingfors, 1930).

[3]) Whereas Nordenskiöld erroneously assigns the neighbourhood of Quito in Ecuador as a region where a game like the *shuke* has been practised, he knows nothing of the games of chance I have myself discovered later in that country: the *huairu* game practised in the southern and eastern mountain regions, the *huairitu* and *singu* in vogue among the forest Indians on the rivers Bobonaza and Pastaza.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

many details, been determined by local conditions, and therefore must differ from the games customary among the ancient mountain Indians. Thus all ceremonial dice games in the Inca empire seem to have been connected with the *cult of the dead*, an idea which is wholly foreign to the Chaco Indians. Further, the Incas probably knew only of *portable* playing-boards, whereas the Chaco Indians always draw the counting-board on the ground. Moreover, the latter Indians use arrows as markers, the place where the player is »drowned», is called »river», and so forth.

The Chaco Indians, in all probability, have only borrowed the leading ideas underlying the game, together with the terminology, from their neighbours in the west, and to a certain extent invented a new game, giving these borrownings an application of their own. When the primitive Indians from the interior of the country came in contact with the comparatively civilized peoples in the west, they learned to know certain games which were said to have the marvellous effect of making the fields fruitful and filling the granaries of the Indians. We may assume that it was precisely this *practical* importance of the game that impressed the mind of the primitive Indians and induced them to invent a game similar to that customary among the Incas and to ascribe to it a similar magical efficacy. But the *shuke* was not the only game which originated in this way under the influence of the Inca civilization. Various other games, both games of chance and games of skill, seem to be in vogue in the Chaco, even among tribes so distant as the Lenguas of Paraguay, but of their possible ceremonial character nothing is known. If we may trust the ethnologists who have hitherto related the customs of the Chaco tribes, the *shuke* game is the only one to which a magical significance is ascribed.

Nor does he know the *taba* game practised by the Quichua Indians all over the Bolivian mountain area. The value of »culture maps» so arbitrarily drawn seems to me most doubtful.

[pp. 206-230 inclusive not processed for the File.]

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

C 581 584 or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

C. 581 593 Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelīte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeńlitse símă*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C 585 Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] ●527 836 584 Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M 585 789 535 When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aleja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *anutsha;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

[p. 91]

leather bracelet, which they continue to wear until, it is said, they give it to the first man who wins their favor. They knit shirts out of twine or in double thickness, very closely knit and yet elastic, which look like coats of mail and have no sleeves, and are garnished in various patterns with pieces of clam shell. These shirts are particularly useful [181] in their fights and as protection against the thorns of the forest, but the Indians have only a few of them.

Other ornaments are made of feathers, especially of the ostrich [rhea--Translator], with which the women deck their foreheads, waists, shoulders, wrists and ankles. The men put on much the same gear when they are about to fight, go to feasts or to treat a sick person, as will later be shown.

The women themselves also weave the wool gathered from the few sheep they possess and arrange the natural wool colors in regular patterns of stripes or squares. They do not know how to make more ornamental figures.

In order to weave they stick four forked pieces of wood into the ground in the form of a rectangle, place a pole across each end to which they affix the warp threads and with a wooden blade about a hand breadth long thread and tamp the wool into place.

They call "weaving " potzin; the "loom" noccaléi, and the "threads" huoléi. These words, which have not the least affinity with the corresponding Spanish words, assure us that the Indians did not learn weaving from the Spaniards -- not that one should lay great stock either by similarities or by the lack of them in words to buttress a judgment of this nature (on the contrary, it happens that the Mataco always do all they can to keep from adopting foreign words to express new things, preferring to use their own words with small changes) but the fact of the matter is that we are not here confronted by one of these circumlocutions. Another possible cause for error might be found in the great difficulty which they have to pronounce words as we do. Furthermore there is the habit of taking Spanish words and modifying them to suit their own language as when they make from "cabra" [goat--Translator] caila, and from Pedro, Peilō.

All work having to do with carrying, making tents, making pots, cooking, weaving, looking for roots and making nets, is women's work. Hunting, fishing, the making of weapons, warring, are men's business. Looking for honey in the forests, where it is abundant, and collecting fruit are activities common to both sexes. I suppose that

M 192 463 indicates "possession" or "deposit"; gúu indicates "make," "maker"; kiá is "means," that is that which is used to procure something, for example: "fish" is yacq-set; "fisherman," yacq-set-quiá; "arrow" is lúték; "arrow maker" lutek-guú; "arrow owner," lutek-ʾhi. By virtue of this same particle, the first time they saw a trunk and a bird cage they called them, and still call them, imai-hi, that is, "clothes keeper"; huen-tié-hi, that is, "bird keeper."

M 286 One of the more advanced industries is that of weaving for which, as I have already reported, they do not use a shuttle but a broad piece of wood about a hand's breadth long with which they press the wool by hand. Another industry is the making of nets M [415] which are often as long as fifteen or twenty meters. Of all their belongings, however, nothing is superior to their bags, which are elegant and made to be very elastic. According to their contents these bags can stretch to an extraordinary size without the mesh's opening too widely and thus allowing the objects to fall out. They M [53] habitually decorate them with patterns, mostly geometrical ones such as parallel lines, triangles and squares.

M 396 The canoe making craft deserves special mention. They are made from a single trunk of the large and corklike yuchan tree which they hollow out roughly and then launch.

M 412 The tools which those savages use are the shells of a kind of large oyster or clam which abounds in the Chaco lakes. They also use jaguar teeth, hard wood, and the jaws of fish such as the palometa, with which they shave their heads and the little hair which grows on their faces.

M 323 [214] Not only are they not ignorant of the ceramic art, but it is in this one art that they most closely approach us in quality.

C M 323 171 Cooking must have contributed much to the discoveries of this industry, but Indian piety regarding the dead is what has determined the major advances and relative progress in the art. It is precisely the Matacos, Tobas, Chunupis and others who do not bury their dead in ceramic vessels who have only rough, unpolished cooking pots, while the Indians who live in Santiago, and the Chiriguanos of Bolivia, although they do have small imperfect jars, have others which are very carefully polished, painted and decorated with small raised nubs, in the largest and most beautiful of which they deposit their dead.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Mataco SI7

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Fig. 66. A. Mataco-Vejos woman impressing a finger-print ornament on the rim of an earthenware vessel.

S:Nordenskiöld E-5,Y (1908-1909, 1913) 1920
SF10 Chiriguano SF10
Chane SF8
Mataco SF7
South American Indians S3
135
C
Ce
532
171*
C
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532
171A
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dance masks from the Chané. Where the latter learnt their use it is at present impossible to say.

The map 12 and table 15 show us the distribution of the mask in S. America.

The places at which burial masks have been found are indicated in the map by squares. In making out this list I have followed PATER SCHMIDT, to whose statements I am able to make a few additions. The fact of the Ona and Yahgan Indians having masks seems to prove that their use is very ancient in S. America. At a ceremony of exorcism among the Mataco I saw some men with pieces of cloth hanging over their faces. I take this to be the most primitive kind of mask.

Table 15 showing the Distribution in S. America. (map 12) of dancing masks and other masks.

3. Tapiete, R. M. L. 216.
4. Chiriguano, R. M. E. 601.
5. Chané.
8. Lengua, GRUBB Plate P. 180.
10. Araucanians, GUEVARA (1) Fig. 5; PATER SCHMIDT P. 1057.
11. Chamacoco, PATER SCHMIDT P. 1060.
13. Karajá, KRAUSE P. 331.
18. Quichua, ACOSTA T. 2, P. 225; SARMIENTO DE GAMBOA P. 68 (Burial masks); COBO V. 4, P. 102. »Y cada atambor tocaban cuatro indios principales vestidos de muy particular librea con camisetas coloradas hasta los pies con rapacejos blancos y colorados; encima se ponían unas pieles de leones desollados enteros y las cabezas vacías en las cuales les tenían puestas unas patenas, zarcillos en las orejas, y en lugar de sus dientes naturales, otros del mismo tamaño y forma.«
19. Aymara. Mestizos, Bolivia. Quite common during the carnival.

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--
Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and
two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent
raiding forays."

302 "Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own
teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat
are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to
improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they
blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

262 "Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable
food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they
store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and
mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts,
crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned,
together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get
other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf
from the forest."

273 "From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
579 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their
drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have
dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor,
are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to
hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

533 "When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its
upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her
262 hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
●535 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

756 witchdoctors of the vicinity, who never declare the man beyond re-
554 covery but bend their every effort in making a great show of their ridiculous and childish practices in order to make death keep away. Gathered, then, in the invalid's hut, they stand about him at some little distance in a semicircle and do not take their eyes off him but observe his every movement with care. They begin to blow and gesture with their hands, now forcefully and with verve, now slowly and softly according as they see that the patient seems more fatigued or gets back some of his strength; and all this in order to pretend that they see death approaching and are trying to chase it away. In the
● [533] same manner they begin to sing in base, funereal tones an air similar to a continuous harsh howling, and, being guided by the condition of the invalid they modify their expressions, gestures and tone of voice. The stricken person for his part always tries, by means of his fatigue, his cries or moans, his frightened eyes and perturbed expression to let the others know what he is feeling and the state he considers himself to be in; and the witchdoctors, following these obvious signs, gesticulate more or less, blow and howl with greater or less softness [606] or loudness, come close and hurl themselves wildly towards the invalid or gently fall back a short distance. When it seems that the sick man is about to die they come at a bound so close to him, heightening their gestures to such a pitch and howling so unceasingly and in such broken, forced and hoarse tones, with eyes so wide open and fearful and with so many expressions of terror, that anyone could easily be led to believe that they do in fact see death in the guise of some deformed and terrible figure and that they wish to frighten it, make it flee or seize it. All this is done so seriously and naturally that no one would suspect them of perpetrating a hoax or deceiving; but the fact is that even if the invalid were still able to live for a while, terror would soon finish him off."

"The witchdoctors are also believed to have the power to drive away and make disappear plagues and calamities such as smallpox, which wreaks havoc among them; the lack of water or its excess and other things. To this end the witchdoctors meet, go off a little way from the camp and, seated upon the ground, like so many Jeremiahs, begin to sing their lamentations, without words of course, accompanying
[534] the sad song with the choc-que-choc produced by the coming together of small stones placed in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

dye themselves red when they are courting, black when they wish 302
to appear dreadful, and green when celebrating some festivity.
These colors come off very easily.

While on the subject of personal adornment, I must say that 304
these Indians, to a greater or lesser degree, are in the habit of 824
tattooing themselves. I have seen this carried to great lengths among some Toba warriors, and especially among the women. It looks something like the scars left by smallpox and is set out in geometric designs. They do it by puncturing the skin with a [216] large thorn coated with a caustic substance which looks like milk and which leaves an indelible mark and remains under the epidermis. This substance is to be found mainly in Bolivia in the region of Santa Cruz, and is called in Guaraní iguoqui. The same name is given to the plant from which it comes which is a vine which produces bunches of white flowers and elongated fruit which break open and expel a sort of dust. In order to obtain iguoqui they cut the bunches before they ripen, and from the stalk there exudes the milky sap used for tattooing. While the operation is in process they keep the portion of stalk submerged in water so that its milky contents will not well out and be lost. A Chiriguano Indian saw one of these vines twenty leagues downstream from the frontier with the whites on the Bermejo River in the place called La Luna Nueva.

A custom very similar in nature to tattooing in its object 302
is the plucking of hair which is a universal activity among the inhabitants of the Chaco and possibly among all the Indians of the New World.

The object of this is to appear better looking, but it is possible that the real cause has something to do with hygiene and comfort.

Maybe they want to set themselves off in this way from the other animals, which are covered with hair.

Meanwhile, either because they are naturally so or because of a gradual natural selection based on their depilatory habit, [142] the fact is that the Indians are almost completely lacking in hair both on the body and face, and the little which does grow they pull out, with very few exceptions.

In spite of their language's being so complete I have been 533 ●
unable to discover canticles or any similar musical effort. All

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I was able to come upon among the Matacos was this attempt at a poetic song, sung goodness only knows how, by the squaws. However, in spite of its failings it does reveal the use of rime:

[537]

Bonica nambonica
Se-le-ctié-no:
Bonica, bonica;
Nambonica, nambonica.

which means: I like, I do not like you to embrace me:
I like, I like, I do not like, I do not like.

They have no dances; those violent gallopings about in a circle holding hands can hardly be called dancing. They are chaste, however, when they do dance, and if men and women happen to be at a dance together each sex forms its own separate circle, one within the other, but without touching.

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In a word, everything pertaining to the imagination, everything coming under the heading of religion, poetry or dance, can be said to be completely lacking among these savages.

[217] Chapter XIII

Social Matters (continued)

But if they have no imagination are they not also heartless and insensitive? It has repeatedly been said and written that the bonds of kinship are not at all close and easily severed among the Indians; and this "fact" has apparently been picked up not from observation but by analogy based on the absence of the family and the existence of concubinage.

I am afraid that this is going too far. We are accustomed to and molded by our Christian tradition, which, by the way, is an exception to the immense majority of other cultural traditions, an exception which is paid for in part by pretense and infidelity, and the barefaced immorality which is prostitution.

It seems to us that if a woman is not joined to a man by all the sacraments of the church, and if she is not his only wife, then there results a shrivelling in all the finer feelings.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

755 535 placed in their midst .... The spectators remained to do honour to the treatment and increase its efficacy, but not without fear that the *ahút*, on quitting the body of the sick man might enter into theirs».[1])

This savage dance was typical of the Indian dances as far as they have the character of magical conjurations. The Indians firmly believe that they can terrify and expel the evil demon who has taken possession of the patient by violent movements and menacing gestures such as those just described. As to the ostrich feathers which the sorcerers had fastened to ankles, wrists, head and waist, some words of explanation may be added. [789] The feather ornaments which the Indians wear in most of their dances and conjurations are not real ornaments but magical charms which eke out the powers emanating from the whole personality of the sorcerer. Like body-paintings, necklaces made of animals' teeth, rattle bells and gourds etc. they effectively help in conjuring the evil spirits.

The following is a conjuration accompanied by dancing which I myself witnessed in a Mataco village in the Bolivian Gran Chaco. Two Indian sorcerers were trying to cure a horse which was evidently badly attacked by an *aittáh* or *nahút*. The cure took place on various successive nights in an open place outside the *tolderia*. One of the sorcerers chanted in the usual way with his closed hand laid on the neck of the sick horse; the other both chanted and danced. Stamping with the feet alternately on the ground to the measure of his chant, he moved some ten steps away from the horse and then back again, repeating these movements several times. In his hand he held the rattle which he shook incessantly as an accompaniment to his dance and chanting. During the dance the man now and then took up a pebble or a small stick from the ground and threw it into the forest, spitting at the same time vigorously in the same direction. On the path where he moved he had laid some live embers. After a while the sorcerer interrupted his dance, stood close to the horse by the side of his colleague, and shaking the rattle heartily over the animal he shouted several times in a loud voice: *yame! yame! yame!*, that is to say, »go out, go out, go out!» These were the only words uttered during the whole conjuration. During his chanting the 755 533 sorcerers only pronounced refrains such *hö, hö, hö, a, a, a,* and so forth. The tune which the dancer again and again repeated and accompanied with his rattle was the following:

[1]) Pelleschi. *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 140.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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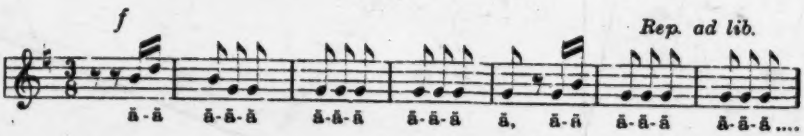

It is evident that the intention of the sorcerer was to drive away the evil demon into the forest in the direction in which he moved during the dance. With the same intention he threw the pebbles and spat in that direction. Again, the object of the embers placed on the path, as the Indians explained to me, was to burn the demon after it had been forced to leave the horse. —

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The invocation of the »good spirit», an act called *ihanéh* by the Mataco, generally immediately follows the conjuration proper, but may also take place without a preceeding conjuration. It is an important act, since on the intervention of the good spirit the success of the whole treatment depends, but externally it does not differ much from a conjuration. At the »prayer», however, the rattle is never used. In all cases which came under my notice the chant or invocation of the good spirit was a chant without words. Evidently the medicine-man thinks that the tone of his voice alone is enough to move the compassion of the guardian spirit.

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Thus, in one invocation of the good spirit which I witnessed the doctor again and again repeated the following refrains:

Am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum,
uh! am gaum, gaum, uh! aum, gaum, gaum, etc.

in another again he incessantly repeated:

ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho,
ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, etc., etc.

Lastly follows the usual extraction of the »arrow» or splinter, if the medicine-man has been successful in his invocation of the good spirit and the latter has come down to his assistance. Generally the doctor draws out the evil by sucking. He spits out the splinter on the ground, thereupon shows it to the bystanders, and declares that it is the thing that has caused the evil. The procedure is thus exactly the same as among the Choroti.

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assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets.

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Avúshe*, when the young men try to »hurry on» the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the »power» lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings.

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: »These spirits . . . fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the tolderias (villages) or round the toldos (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm».[1]) This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible.

[1]) Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.

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may kill him. The snake's *āhat* is called *punsoya* (perhaps Spanish-ponzoña : poison).

When a man is bitten by a snake he must kill the reptile and take it home in order to be cured rapidly. If he has been bitten while away from his home, he must dig a groove and put the snake into it, facing it in the opposite direction to that which he is taking. Thus the snake cannot enter him.

Tawkxwax taught the men the procedure to be followed in order to cure snake bites.

XII. How to Become a Singer

Those who want to become good singers must go to the bush and stay there for quite a long time. They must kill birds who are good singers and eat them after they have been made into powder and mixed with blood extracted from the arm. When they are in the bush they must first beat a drum, then run. Thus they will perhaps dream about a singing bird. When they wake up they must then take their drums and sing the song they heard in their dreams. One must not awaken until the song is finished or he will not remember it. Everyone has two songs and he must sing them every day in order to learn them. Ordinarily several young men go to the bush and after they have dreamed of a song they sing one after another. Generally three or four days are sufficient to master a song.

One must not sing someone else's song. If after one has eaten a bird he dreams of an iguana, it is no longer worth while to go on, for he will never become a good singer. The birds one dreams about and who teach one how to sing are not ordinary birds, they are *paata* (supernatural beings). The women do not know how to sing but they can cry when they have to mourn. Not all women know how to weep. In order to weep well, a woman must dream about another woman who is a good mourner. There are some exceptional women who can sing.

wore a red knitted shirt of wool decorated with shells. Many wore on their foreheads frontlets trimmed with feathers. Another ceremonial accessory worn by most of them consisted of a bunch ostrich or *potsax* feathers. Two especially famous medicine-men had their faces painted black and red and on the hat of one of them were ostrich feathers. Naturally among the performers were a number of women, some of whom had their cheeks painted red. In front of the performer's row some spears had been stuck into the ground with the points downward. A spear with the point upward was also stuck in the ground at the same distance away as the others. During the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was fixed to the spear with the head pointed up. When I arrived I noticed in front of the row a young man who was not a magician. He was grinding into a calabash the *hatax* seeds from which the medicine-men later took pinches.

The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical to that sung by the medicine-men when curing diseases. The singing was punctuated by the rattling of the gourds and from time to time by the clacking of hoof and rattle necklaces and the whistling of the flutes. Each blowing of the whistle indicated a new phase in the traditional sequence of events associated with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine-man, its arrival or departure from a given place). The rattle-gourd is sometimes brandished in a theatening manner as though to scare away an invisible being. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, some of the performers took a snuff of *hatax* powder. Those who had bunches of feathers stretched them forward making the same gesture which has already been described when speaking of the rattles. One of the performers was running in front and behind his colleagues, holding a bunch of feathers in his hand and dusting them off from head to foot. He was assisted by another who was holding bells and rattles which he shook behind his companions. After they had taken a snuff of *hatax* the performers went on singing, shak-

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755 ing the rattles and performing threatening gestures. Some
533 of the medicine-men sang the song of their own spirits ignoring the chants of their colleagues.

These preliminaries were succeeded by a direct attack
755 against the disease. Some individuals stepped out from the row and with violent gestures each brandished his bunch of feathers or the rattle-gourds then returned to their places in line. A man began kicking the earth and was immediately imitated by others who took up handfuls of dust which they threw in front of themselves. The whole troop followed this example and they rushed against the disease. Some concentrated all their strength on a special spot as though they had driven the Disease there, hitting the spot repeatedly with their sabers or bunches of feathers, then stamping on the ground as though they had buried their victim. The attack against the invisible enemy lasted for a long time, much enthusiasm being shown. Others brandished bunches of feathers which they had tied to the points of their spears.

The second part of the ceremony corresponds to what we might call a general desinfection. The medicine-men first wiped one another off, then let their gourds rattle quite close to their colleagues, then blew on each other's heads and necks as though for illness. Then everyone, both men and women, who had attended the ceremony were called. They all sat down and the medicine-men and-women went to them, wiped their bodies with bunches of feathers, blew on their heads and let the rattles tinkle all along their bodies. These rites were performed with the same care on children as on adults. Our friend Sanchez was given special attention. Aften having been blown on by the *cacique* and chief medicine-man, assisted by four magicians, two of whom blew on him and sang, the others shook their rattles, bells and gourds. The medicine-men who had remained in the same place turned around and repeated all the gestures they had performed before. Once more some of them stepped out of the file to cut grass under which they frantically buried the

They accompanied
755 themselves with a very deep song, a sort of *heh, heh,* repeated
535 rhythmically but on different notes. When the dancers
[533] got tired they left the file without ceasing to sing, and after they had rested for a while they resumed their places.

The second part consisted of dancing couples. The dancers faced each other in twos, and holding each other by the arm made side jumps, holding their legs parallel but slightly apart. Always moving from right to left they went several times round the altar, from time to time spinning themselves about. When they stopped to catch their breath one of them uttered a loud cry and started to dance alone, that is to say, making side jumps with parted and stiff legs, always facing the altar, although he whirled now and then. After spinning around twice he was joined by the others. They stopped dancing, sat down and one of them took off his ornaments. Another dancer covered himself entirely with a poncho and uttered his ë ë ë, always in the same tone. The medicine-man went to get the poncho he had left near the altar, he put it on the child and started to sing and to blow on the little patient. The dancer who had covered himself with the poncho kept silent, but remained under his cover. When the ceremony was over he began to sing.

a) *Treatment of a Man Possessed by a Spirit*

755 A man was caught by a spirit at about 9 P. M. He was decorated with red belts and placed in the center of the ceremonial ground. He was given two bells and in front of him were stuck three sticks, one of which about 2 yards long was totally covered with a rather dark cloth, the other two between 2½ and 3 fect high had rags and bunches of ostrich feathers fastened to their tops. The two medicine-men, wearing only belts of ostrich feathers and holding in their hands metal rattles, were standing by the side of the patient. A little further away were two assistants (probably

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with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

533 into a walk, the right foot moving first and the left one being
535 slowly brought up to it. The direction of the walk is always from left to right. The rhythm of the song becomes more and more accelerated, transforming itself into a rather rapid running, always in the same direction, the right foot stamping heavily on the ground thus marking the time. After fifteen minutes more or less, the dancers stop at a signal given by their leader, then begin again.

535 2. The dancers stand in two equal lines facing each other with their arms resting on their neighbor's shoulders. Between the two files the leader stands alone. When he gives a signal both files begin moving and singing. One of the files goes toward the other while the latter withdraws at a slow trot. In the meantime the leader runs between the files and along them, going more quickly than the dancers. Each time he runs around twice he points out a dancer in one of the files, who then moves rapidly toward the opposite file, choses a dancer and draws him out. Gradually the total number of dancers diminishes. When there are only three left, the leader nods to one of the remaining three, telling him to choose a dancer in the opposite file, then the game goes on in the opposite direction.

3. The dancers form two or more files, standing one behind the other, holding each other by the waist, singing and shouting. They start running, each file trying to dislodge the other line and throw down the dancers, being careful themselves not to be separated. In order to defend themselves the files run beside each other and when they think the time has come they try to cut the others off and throw disorder into the opposite side.

4. This dance begins like the first one, the difference being that the dancers' hands rest on the shoulders and not on the hips. Once the circle has started running it is broken up suddenly at one point and divided into several files that first stamp and then start running, forming a spiral which grows tighter and tighter. When they stand so close together

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that all movement is impossible except to stamp, the spiral begins to unfold itself, first very slowly, then more and more quickly. The dancers are sometimes many. The circle divides into two files which develop simultaneously on both sides of the enclosure.

5. The young men form a file from the center of the dance enclosure to the outer border. Each dancer puts his hand on the shoulder of one neighbor and his other hand on the hip of his other neighbor. The file starts slowly to move; the man in the center whirls himself in a circle and the others follow the movement. The movement is faster toward the outer ends of the file and is accompanied by songs. Sometimes the singing stops but the movement goes on, then the singing starts again.

From time to time the dance is interrupted by a young man following a girl. After they have been running through the dancing place of the village they ordinarily sleep together and on the following day appear with their faces painted red.

According to my informant the dancing songs have no meaning, being mere rhythmic utterances.

XIX. Mourning Rites

A man is buried in the bush in a grave about six feet deep immediately after dying. The dead are buried reclining on their right sides with their faces toward their fields. If they were placed in any other position they could not find the way to their houses and they would become lost. No food is given to the dead except a calabash half filled with water. The soul drinks this water to quench his thirst during his journey to the underworld. All the personal belongings of the deceased are burned and their souls come out to join the soul of their owner. His animals are not killed, but when they die their souls join that of their master.

Immediately after death all grown up members of the deceased, even very remote relatives, begin to weep, ac-

764 companying themselves on rattles and drums. These laments last for about one hour after death, then begin again when the corpse is carried away to be buried and finally when they come back from the burial. But on the following day only very near relatives parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, go on weeping. Those who were already mourning for someone else weep louder than the others because they mourn for two.

765 The laments take place at sunrise and at sunset as well as in the middle of the afternoon. During the first days of mourning the near relatives of the deceased go to his home to mourn. There they run and dance, going continually [535] from one place to another and shaking their rattles with both hands. They accompany the dance with lamentations. With the exception of the wife of the deceased, women always mourn in this way, shaking rattles, dancing and lamentations. Mourning women must not appear bareheaded or with a naked face for they ought not to be seen. People [533] sing and play on rattles during the mourning period in order that the dead person may readily be forgotten. The laments which last two or three hours every day are supposed to help the living forget the dead. After six months, more or less, they weep only at dawn and even then very rarely. [302] The relatives of the dead person must cut off their hair in order not to displease the dead who would attack their heads and make them bald. The wife, at the death of her husband, observes mourning for two years. She shuts herself up in a special little hut often adjoining the hut of her married son, or daughter if she has no son.

768 The house of the deceased is pulled down and a new one built about 10 yards away. If this were not done the dead man would come back within fourteen days after death, attracted by memories of his previous life. The materials of the old house are used in the construction of the new one.

A widow may leave her home to satisfy her wants only at night. If she goes out during the day the dead man gets

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *łyatithli*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *sawuklawh*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
548 self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
534 and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies
583 down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence inti-
836 mate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of
[582] sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mɨssa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who
[535] shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/214 cont./

755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was [533] [535] resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[714] [716] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

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(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

756 554 witchdoctors of the vicinity, who never declare the man beyond recovery but bend their every effort in making a great show of their ridiculous and childish practices in order to make death keep away. Gathered, then, in the invalid's hut, they stand about him at some little distance in a semicircle and do not take their eyes off him but observe his every movement with care. They begin to blow and gesture with their hands, now forcefully and with verve, now slowly and softly according as they see that the patient seems more fatigued or gets back some of his strength; and all this in order to pretend that they see death approaching and are trying to chase it away. In the [533] same manner they begin to sing in base, funereal tones an air similar to a continuous harsh howling, and, being guided by the condition of the invalid they modify their expressions, gestures and tone of voice. The stricken person for his part always tries, by means of his fatigue, his cries or moans, his frightened eyes and perturbed expression to let the others know what he is feeling and the state he considers himself to be in; and the witchdoctors, following these obvious signs, gesticulate more or less, blow and howl with greater or less softness [606] or loudness, come close and hurl themselves wildly towards the invalid or gently fall back a short distance. When it seems that the sick man is about to die they come at a bound so close to him, heightening their gestures to such a pitch and howling so unceasingly and in such broken, forced and hoarse tones, with eyes so wide open and fearful and with so many expressions of terror, that anyone could easily be led to believe that they do in fact see death in the guise of some deformed and terrible figure and that they wish to frighten it, make it flee or seize it. All this is done so seriously and naturally that no one would suspect them of perpetrating a hoax or deceiving; but the fact is that even if the invalid were still able to live for a while, terror would soon finish him off."

"The witchdoctors are also believed to have the power to drive away and make disappear plagues and calamities such as smallpox, which wreaks havoc among them; the lack of water or its excess and other things. To this end the witchdoctors meet, go off a little way from the camp and, seated upon the ground, like so many Jeremiahs, begin to sing their lamentations, without words of course, accompanying ● [534] the sad song with the choc-que-choc produced by the coming together of small stones placed in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

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Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

Chapter XIV.

2. Other kinds of conjuration.

From what has been stated above of the social customs of the Chaco Indians, we realize that there is hardly any important event in the life of these natives which is not celebrated with religious or magical ceremonies of some kind. Generally these ceremonies are simple: drumming, the shaking of rattles, dancing and chanting form the main features in all of them. A few words may be said in this connection about the magical instruments, the *drum* and the *rattle*.

The drum, which is called *usyúk* by the Choroti, *huitsyúk* by the Mataco and *kaltaki* by the Tobas, is known to all Pilcomayo tribes, although it is nowadays little used by the Bolivian Tobas. It is a simple instrument, consisting of a small clay pot which is covered with a goat's or deer's skin. In beating the drum only one stick is used. Generally the pot is partly filled with water — a detail which I cannot exactly account for, since it has no perceptible influence upon the tone of the instrument. Probably the water is believed to eke out in some way its magical efficacy. The drum is the principal magical instrument of the Argentine Mataco who use the rattle gourd less, whereas, on the other hand, the Choroti, who also use both instruments, seem to appreciate the rattle more. In a Mataco village the drum is at work nearly every day: sometimes the spirit of a dead Indian is frightened away with it, sometimes other evil spirits, disease-spirits, spirits of hurricanes, tempests, drought, etc. are conjured with it; sometimes the Indians try to influence the good spirits animating trees and plants with it, so as to effect an abundant harvest of algaroba and chañar. The Choroti again mainly use the drum during the algaroba season, when the instrument is beaten both day and night. In a Choroti village where I lived for several months, an Indian sorcerer was specially engaged for this important ceremony.

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The object of the drumming was to »hurry on» the ripening of the algaroba and the chañar fruits, and at the same time to frighten away the evil spirits of hurricanes and tempests which frequently blight these trees at the time when they are flowering. Drought is another great danger to a rich algaroba and chañar harvest. By means of drumming the demons, who cause drought by keeping rain back, are conjured. In some cases it seems as if the drumming Indian, by the very time in which he is beating his drum, were imitating the fall of the rain-drops. The Choroti drummer seldom wears the rattle-belt (*tahús*), which on the other hand seems to be regarded as indispensable by the Mataco drummer. The latter, when he is beating the drum, continually moves his body up and down and from one side to the other in order that the rattle which he wears round the waist may make a noise.

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The other of the two principal magical instruments of the Chaco Indians is the rattle gourd, called *poketá* by the Tobas, *votsotáh* by the Mataco, and *pelīte* by the Choroti. It consists of a round or oval bottle-gourd, hollowed out through a small opening in the tapering stem, and then filled with dry seeds, generally of tusca, small shells, beads, or other things producing a rattling sound. The outside is often ornamented with lines, triangles, squares, or other geometric designs. The instrument, when shaken, is believed to have a remarkable »power», which is partly due to the magical properties of the gourd itself, partly to the seeds or other things with which it is filled, partly to the geometric figures with which the outside of the gourd is ornamented. The instrument is used much on the same occasions and for the same purposes as the drum. I have stated, however, that the *Choroti* not only use the *pelīte* to frighten away or conjure evil spirits in general, but also for certain positive ends. To shake the rattle is in the Choroti language called *nekeālitse;* when it is shaken for a special purpose they use the expression *nekeālitse sīmā*, which means more or less: »to shake the rattle to obtain something». Thus I have mentioned that during the marriage and courtship dances such young men as are despised by the girls are in the habit of shaking their rattles in order to »hurry on» the latter and to have greater success in love. Similarly, when a young man goes out to find a bride in connection with the dances, his father at home continually shakes the rattle to »hurry on» the girls on behalf of his son and promote his important undertaking. There are many other instances of the same kind. When the Choroti women go out in the forest in the morning to collect algaroba beans for the brewing of the sacred beer or other wild

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cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

755 ing to the disease while an old woman, who was a magician, sang and blew on the patient. The others were talking among themselves without paying any attention to what was happening. After a pause, during which everybody drank some of the wine required by the disease, a singing man started to run around the patient, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine-man spoke once more with disease while the medicine-woman continued blowing on the patient and another medicine-man placed around the head of the patient front pages of illustrated papers and popular novels. The man who was running stopped and the chief medicine-man started talking with the others. Everybody sat down and drank some water, then two women began to walk rapidly around the others while they sang. One of them stopped and after a short while the other [535] one stopped too. Then all who were present started dancing. The dance was interrupted only by the coughing of the patient who seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. She actually died during the ceremony. Immediately after her [764] death the dance stopped. The old women ran about singing and shaking their rattles. Two men laid the dead woman on her right side and folded her legs and arms. They wrapped her in the pieces of cloth on which she had been lying and she was taken to her home. The medicine-men undressed quietly while the women of the family uttered lamentations.

c) *General Expulsion of Disease*

755 292 The ceremony for general expulsion of disease took place early in the morning in the open air, far from all houses. It was performed by all the medicine-men of the village standing in a row. All were holding in their hands a rattle-gourd [534] and a bone whistle. Some were provided with strips of cloth to which were attached rattles; the strips were worn across the chest or hung at the elbow. Others wore ceremonial shirts, some wore shirts made of *caraguatá* fiber and one

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kystithli*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samaklandi*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
[534] and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence intimate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
583 836 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of
[582] sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [242] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti
Ashluslay SK5
Matáco SI7

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M
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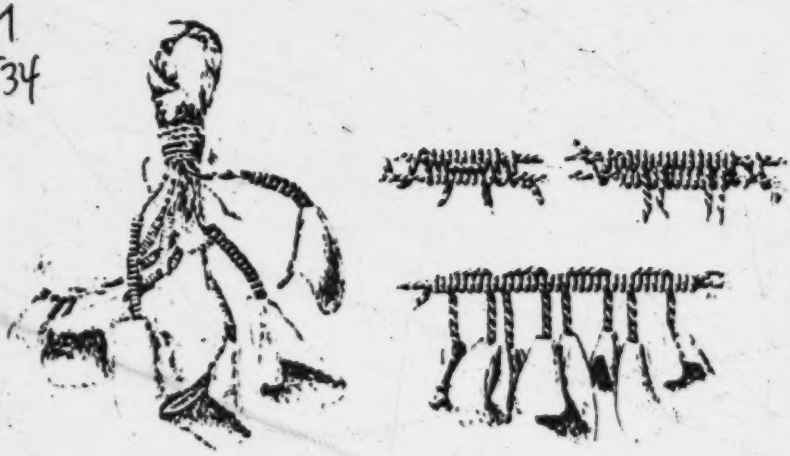

a. b.

Fig. 92. Rattles made of the claws of animals.
a G. M. (B. 208) 1/2. Ashluslay.
b R. M. (M. 241) 1/4. Matáco.

I was able to come upon among the Matacos was this attempt at a poetic song, sung goodness only knows how, by the squaws. However, in spite of its failings it does reveal the use of rime:

Bonica nambonica
Se-le-ctié-nó:
Bonica, bonica;
Nambonica, nambonica.

which means: I like, I do not like you to embrace me:
I like, I like, I do not like, I do not like.

They have no dances; those violent gallopings about in a circle holding hands can hardly be called dancing. They are chaste, however, when they do dance, and if men and women happen to be at a dance together each sex forms its own separate circle, one within the other, but without touching.

In a word, everything pertaining to the imagination, everything coming under the heading of religion, poetry or dance, can be said to be completely lacking among these savages.

[217] Chapter XIII

Social Matters (continued)

But if they have no imagination are they not also heartless and insensitive? It has repeatedly been said and written that the bonds of kinship are not at all close and easily severed among the Indians; and this "fact" has apparently been picked up not from observation but by analogy based on the absence of the family and the existence of concubinage.

I am afraid that this is going too far. We are accustomed to and molded by our Christian tradition, which, by the way, is an exception to the immense majority of other cultural traditions, an exception which is paid for in part by pretense and infidelity, and the barefaced immorality which is prostitution.

It seems to us that if a woman is not joined to a man by all the sacraments of the church, and if she is not his only wife, then there results a shrivelling in all the finer feelings.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

C 581 584 or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

C. 581 593 Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelīte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeðlitse símă*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C. 585 Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 636 584 Among the *Matáco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M 585 789 ●535 When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

them. The aim of the dance is partly to protect the former against supernatural dangers, an idea generally associated with the Indian ring-dances. But in addition, it seems to have special reference to marriage, for it is supposed in some mysterious way to influence the marriage candidates favourably. On this particular point, however, I did not receive further information from the Indians.

Lastly, we have to consider the marriage customs of the *Tobas*. The Tobas are generally monogamous for the simple reason that it is difficult for an ordinary man to maintain several wives and a large family, but there are exceptions to this rule. Polygamy is, however, allowed by custom, and if a Toba considers himself rich enough and has an opportunity of getting wives, it is of no rare occurrence that he marries two, three, or more women, who generally live in different villages owing to the jealousy they entertain for each other. This kind of polygamy is especially found among the great chiefs. Thus the famous cacique Taycolique has had in all ten wives. One has died, he has divorced five, and at the time of my stay among the Tobas he had four wives. Such great chiefs frequently separate themselves from their wives only for the sake of marrying some younger and prettier woman. The children of a divorced wife have not the same rights as the children of her supplanter, and if the eldest son is born of such a wife he cannot become chief on the death of his father; in this case the eldest son of the new wife will inherit the chieftainship. The father, however, does not break completely with the children of a divorced wife if they are adult, but maintains relations with them, and they sometimes visit their father.

Among the Tobas, as among most Chaco tribes, pre-nuptial chastity is almost unknown, great sexual liberty being allowed both boys and girls before marriage. As soon as a girl is marriageable, that is, has passed her first menstruation, she may choose casual lovers, and generally she does not fail to make use of her freedoom. Although in some parts of the country, the sexual liberty of the Toba girls seems to have degenerated into prostitution, there is no doubt that the social morality of the people has approved of this custom since ancient times. The young men and women meet at the dances, some of which, among the Tobas as among the Choroti, are intimately connected with the sexual life. The girls cannot, however, as among the Choroti, take the initiative in contracting marriage.

When a Toba man has found a girl whom he likes and wants for his

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

M 846

»to be a little sick», which means that he has to be cautious with regard to his work and his diet, just like his wife. Any heavy work, hunting, fishing, the touching of iron instruments, is prohibited to the father, since otherwise his delicate son might fall ill and die. Fasting is likewise obligatory for both of them. The Mataco say of both parents: *uenhitātāk, yil vuh. i.e.*, »they do not eat, there are many demons of death» (moving about and threatening especially the child, but also the parents themselves). A light vegetable food, mainly consisting of boiled and mashed maize, is prescribed for both of them.

When the confined woman has been delivered, her ventral parts must be well covered to protect her against evil spirits which might do her harm. In the evening drums are beaten to keep off the same supernatural, malicious powers. If the woman is the wife of a great chief, a special dance is performed which the Mataco call *Katináh* and which takes place at great feasts celebrated by the whole village community. Like all other dances of the Mataco, the *Katináh* is in its character ceremonial or a sort of conjuration by which evil spirits are kept off or made harmless.

M [622 535]

Among the *Tobas*, just as in part among the Mataco, the ceremonies which are performed and the precautions taken are more elaborate when the mother is the wife of a great chief. Even some time before birth takes place the woman, as we have already seen, has to observe certain rules in regard to her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish. As soon as the woman has been delivered her body must be well covered, for otherwise, I was told, the evil spirits may enter into her and kill both her and her new-born babe. The danger is particularly great at night. Therefore the Indians assemble in great numbers outside the chief's house, chanting the whole night, accompanying themselves with their rattle-gourds and drinking great quantities of algaroba beer. In the day the young men perform the dance *Nomí*. During the first days the woman does not leave the house, and although she is not ill she remains completely inactive. She likewise continues to fast, eating neither fish nor meat and living solely on maize and certain leaves. — The above ceremonies are performed, and the rules of diet are observed, during five days, or until the navel-wound of the child is completely healed.

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Much the same ceremonies are performed when the mother is a woman of ordinary rank, with the exception that the father of the new-born child alone chants to his rattle the first evening after the birth; and the dance *Nomí* does not take place. The happy event is always celebrated by an algaroba drinking-bout. The mother does not stay in bed and

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112

The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter.

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *Mataco* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aitták* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men.

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*.

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat.

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *Mataco* and the *Choroti* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Hämák, hämóh, hämák hämóh,
hämák, hamóya, hämák, hamóya,
hämák, hämóh, etc.

Hämák means 'malicious', evil, and *hämóh* 'go away'. The meaning of the whole conjuration thus is: »go away, evil demon!» The phrase, being incessantly repeated in conjunction with the shaking of the rattle and other operations, is supposed to have the effect of forcing the demon to leave the body.

The Mataco medicine-men however generally try to make their conjurations of the demons of sickness more effective through *dancing*. Sometimes the doctor himself interrupts his incantations and other operations and starts to dance round the patient, sometimes other Indian men or women perform a savage dance round the patient while the curer leans over him. The dance which has for its object to conjure a disease-demon is called *Nahútsak* by the Mataco. The very name (drived from *nahút*, evil spirit) indicates the purely ceremonial character of this dance. There are however different forms of the *Nahútsak*. In some cases it is a sort of ring-dance; in other cases the Mataco by this name denote a dance of the same type as the *Nahót dónnaran* of the Tobas, which will presently be described. 755 535

To give the reader an idea of the Mataco dance *Nahútsak* in a case of sickness I may first borrow the following vivid description of a conjuration which the Italian explorer Pelleschi once witnessed in a Mataco village in the Argentine Gran Chaco. »In the midst of the tolderia», he tells us, »in a sort of open square, I saw a circle of black figures lighted up here and there by the flames of the great fire: these were women and men sitting on their heels silently smoking. Within the circle four robust men were running backwards and forwards within a space of about eight yards. Ostrich feathers and little bells were fastened to their ankles, wrists, heads and waists . . In their hands, which were always lifted up in gesticulation, they held small gourds, half-filled with grain, and these, being shaken, added to the din. They rushed about shouting and yelling, panting and sweating; thrusting out their legs, they stamped hard upon the ground, and then raised their voices in desperation, lifting up their arms, with head bowed and body curved. By turns two of them would stop short, and squatting on the ground would shake their heads rapidly from left to right, backwards and forwards, groaning, blowing, and spitting on the back, legs, head and face of two sick persons who had been

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

755 535 placed in their midst .... The spectators remained to do honour to the treatment and increase its efficacy, but not without fear that the *ahút*, on quitting the body of the sick man might enter into theirs».[1])

This savage dance was typical of the Indian dances as far as they have the character of magical conjurations. The Indians firmly believe that they can terrify and expel the evil demon who has taken possession of the patient by violent movements and menacing gestures such as those just described. As to the ostrich feathers which the sorcerers had fastened to ankles, wrists, head and waist, some words of explanation may be added. The feather ornaments which the Indians wear in [789] most of their dances and conjurations are not real ornaments but magical charms which eke out the powers emanating from the whole personality of the sorcerer. Like body-paintings, necklaces made of animals' teeth, rattle bells and gourds etc. they effectively help in conjuring the evil spirits.

The following is a conjuration accompanied by dancing which I myself witnessed in a Mataco village in the Bolivian Gran Chaco. Two Indian sorcerers were trying to cure a horse which was evidently badly attacked by an *aittáh* or *nahút*. The cure took place on various successive nights in an open place outside the *tolderia*. One of the sorcerers chanted in the usual way with his closed hand laid on the neck of the sick horse; the other both chanted and danced. Stamping with the feet alternately on the ground to the measure of his chant, he moved some ten steps away from the horse and then back again, repeating these movements several times. In his hand he held the rattle which he shook incessantly as an accompaniment to his dance and chanting. During the dance the man now and then took up a pebble or a small stick from the ground and threw it into the forest, spitting at the same time vigorously in the same direction. On the path where he moved he had laid some live embers. After a while the sorcerer interrupted his dance, stood close to the horse by the side of his colleague, and shaking the rattle heartily over the animal he shouted several times in a loud voice: *yame! yame! yame!*, that is to say, »go out, go out, go out!» These were the only words uttered during the whole conjuration. During his chanting the 755 533 sorcerers only pronounced refrains such *hõ, hõ, hõ, a, a, a*, and so forth. The tune which the dancer again and again repeated and accompanied with his rattle was the following:

[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 140.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

T 789

grew faster and faster, and the chanting accompanying them louder and louder. Soon he seized his magical instrument, the bell rattle called *heligday*, and shook it at first slowly and gradually faster, keeping time with his steps. When the dance reached its culmination, the feet of the dancer moved with intense rapidity, the chanting developed into an inarticulate yelling, and the man seemed to be in a real state of ecstasy. The other men also began to take part in the dance, accelerating their movements as well as their chanting gradually like the principal dancer, and accompanying themselves with their rattles. In this way the noisy performance was continued for several hours. Its object, as the Indians told me, was to promote the ripening of the chañar fruit. The dance seemed to have particular reference to the fruits already gathered, since the effect of all similar Indian dances usually follows on the principle of *pars pro toto*. The Indians evidently believe that the fast movements of the dancer in connection with the chanting and rattling are able to exert a mysterious influence upon the spirit animating the fruit, and the influence is not limited to the fruits gathered at the moment, but according to magical principles is believed to be extended to all plants of the species.

M 789 ● 535

Similarly the *Mataco* try to promote the processes of nature by dancing. Typical of this was a dance which Mataco and Choroti Indians once arranged in common at the sugar factories in northern Argentine, where they were employed as labourers to cut the cane. The dance was a kind of *Nahûtsak* the object of which was to hurry on the ripening of the sugar plant. The Bolivian Mataco, some of which cultivate the sugar cane, are known to perform this magic dance in their own land too. A bundle of sugar canes, tied together, was held by two Indians in an erect position on the ground. Round these men the other Indians formed a circle. The women joined in, forming a larger circle behind the men. All started to dance, moving round the canes, stamping alternately with their feet on the ground and chanting with a loud voice, keeping time with their steps.

This magical dance to promote the growth of the sugar cane is obviously based on the same principle as the Toba dance just mentioned: the few canes round which the Mataco Indians performed their dance represented the whole field of sugar cane. The idea evidently underlying the rite was that after these specimens of the plant had been properly prepared — *i. e.* the indwelling spirit influenced in the desired direction — the rest of the canes in the fields were likewise favourably influenced.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

I have so far only spoken of the dances and other rites which take place at the preparation of the sacred drinks. During the algaroba season, festivals are held almost continuously, and these festivals are chiefly celebrated with drinking-bouts and dancing. Those of the Chaco Indians who have been in contact with the whites and seen the great festival with which, in Argentine and Boliva, they celebrate their carnival in February say that the algaroba season is their own carnival time and that they, too, have their carnival dances. The dances which among the Choroti take place at that time have partly been described before in connection with the customs practised by these Indians at courtship and marriage. In addition to the customary courtship dance *Avúshe*, the great festival, which is called *lākinene*, is celebrated with two more dances, those called *Ahlénta* and *Jóhlōki*. *Jóhlōki* is the name by which the Choroti call the Tobas, a fact that seems to indicate that the Choroti have borrowed the dance from their neighbours. The Tobas themselves call the dance *Nahotti*. It is a ring-dance; the dancing men are arranged in a circle and have their arms round each other's waists, moving round to the right or to the left to the rhythm of a chant. The *Ahlénta* again is identical with the Toba dance *Nomi*. Nevertheless, the Choroti seem to have borrowed it from their southern neighbours, the Ashluslay Indians on the lower Pilcomayo, a fact that may be inferred from the name; for just as *Jóhlōki* means »the Toba dance«, so *Ahlénta* means »the Ashluslay dance« (Choroti *Ahle* = Ashluslay). I would add in this connection that the dances of the Chaco tribes are, in the main, common to all the tribes; there are certain dances which occur among different tribes under different names.

The chants sung at the dances are rather monotonous and are composed of a series of words which apparently have no meaning; for instance in the *Jóhlōki*:

Hā-e-sa-alia,
Hiáh-hia-ália,
He-éh-hia-ália, hia-ália,
Hi-áh,
Hā-he-éh, hā-he-éh,
Hā-se-éh, hā-se-éh, hā-se-éh, etc.

Only the younger unmarried men perform these dances, the older ones being constantly engaged in drinking algaroba beer (*atās*). Unmarried girls are allowed to be present, but as we have seen they do not as a rule

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI/1

A peculiarity of the *Nomí* is that it is the only Toba dance which takes place in the day-time; in fact, it is *always* performed during the day, just as other dances are always performed at night. Of the reason of this I am not quite sure, but it is probably to be sought in the particular character of the dance. Most Indian dances are in their nature conjurations of evil spirits, and since these spirits move about especially at night, it is conceivable that the dances are, as a rule, night ceremonies. The dance *Nomí* again, chiefly has for its object the promotion of fertility and the ripening of the algaroba fruit and therefore takes place in the day, just as the Choroti dances, in so far as they have the same object, often take place in the day. It is true that the *Nomí* is also intended to conjure the ghosts of the dead, but these differ from other spirits precisely in that they are generally believed to visit their living relatives in the day-time, when the drinking-feasts are celebrated.

The Mataco also have their festival dance, which in their language is called *Nakătin* or *Katinák*. It corresponds exactly to the Toba dance *Nomi*, and is performed during the algaroba season with the same object, namely, to secure an abundant harvest and to keep off the spirits of the dead, called *kusitah* by the Mataco.

Whether the Mataco have been influenced in this festival dance by their neighbours the Tobas, with whom they have considerable intercourse, I cannot say, but the idea that the dead like to visit the living at the time of the harvest and at the great drinking-feasts, is certainly familiar to many South American tribes. Thus the *Avas* and the *Chané*, who now live on the western border of the Chaco, but came originally to these regions from the north and cannot be reckoned among the Chaco tribes proper, especially practise dancing at their drinking-feasts. Since on this particular point there is an interesting analogy between the customs of the Avas and those of the Chaco tribes, I shall mention what I know about the drinking-feasts of the Avas and the Chané. Their sacred drink is maize beer, called *cangüi* in the Guarani language, which exactly corresponds to the sacred beers brewed from the algaroba and some other fruits in the Chaco. The *cangüi* festivals of the Avas as well as the dance performed in connection with them have been described by the Catholic missionaries, but none of them seems to have realized the religious significance of these ceremonies. The majority of these Indians are now Christians in name and strongly influenced by Christian civilization, having consequently dropped or greatly modified many of their ancient customs. I myself have only witnessed their

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000 ance. The older Indians still knew that the object of the dance at which this dress was worn was to conjure the spirits of the dead, the *añas*, who were believed to come in great numbers to the annual drinking-feasts with the intention of taking part in these joyful entertainments. But the ostrich dress was not the only thing worn on these occasions. Masks were also worn and rattles of hard shells were tied round the legs. The masks and the rattles, together with the ostrich dress and the *yandúa*, formed a real magical apparatus intended to drive off and conjure the unwelcome guests. We know that masks are especially worn by the Indians at death-feasts and that they are, or at least originally have been, purely magical things comparable to drums, rattles, etc., with which supernatural beings are influenced. Even in our days the Avas and Chané use masks at the carnival of the whites in connection with the dance performed on that occasion. They are rudely carved out of a soft kind of wood into the likeness of a human face and are afterwards, according to a common Indian custom, thrown away or destroyed. The mask, which has been tabooed or infected because of its contact with the dangerous spirits, can no longer be used.

The participation of the half-civilised Indians, with their native religious ceremonies, in the carnival of the whites, is an interesting phenomenon. It shows us the amalgamation of a Christian and a purely heathen festival, an amalgamation which of course is psychologically possible only under the assumption that there is an intrinsic connection between them.

226 535 As to the magical dances of the Chaco Indians, I may mention that the Mataco and the Choroti have a dance, the particular object of which is to secure good luck in fishing. The Mataco call this ceremonial dance *Vúokoi*, the Choroti again *Siyúhs*. *Siyúhs* is the name of the kind of fish called *bocachico* in Spanish, the most common fish in the Pilcomayo river. Fishing is the main livelihood of the tribes who have settled on the banks of the river, and the fishing season proper begins at the end of May or the beginning of June, when the dry season in the strict sense begins and the water in the river is low. I have not seen this dance performed, I have only been told about it by the Indians. It is a sort of ring-dance, the Indians making movements in quick time round a live fish placed on the ground, while an Indian standing outside the circle tries to catch the fish. Immediately after the dance is finished the Indians run down to the river, and, thanks to the dance, will have good luck. The dance is believed to have the power of making the fish

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assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets.

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Aviúshe*, when the young men try to »hurry on» the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the »power» lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings.

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: »These spirits ... fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the tolderías (villages) or round the toldos (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm.[1]) This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible.

[1]) Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.

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Choroti SK6

M C 764 M [535]

chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a sign of sorrow, but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *náhsah* (= *eiz sáhe*), *i. e.* »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M 764 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algaroba beer is most appreciated, but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly, the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

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careta (big armadillo) or the skin of an alligator in the house. The disease will think that the animals are there and will not go into the house.

a) *The Treatment of Disease*

I attended a ceremony for the treatment of disease. The ceremony took place in front of some huts, the space was closed in by awnings and cloth. Inside the enclosure were the patient, the medicine-man and a certain number of individuals who assisted the latter. The patient, an old man, was sitting in the center of the space, his body carefully covered with cloth. The medicine-man stood near him and while murmuring incantations blew on the patient's body through his half clenched hand, beginning with his back, then the shoulders, the face and so on. In the meantime four or five men were dancing without interruption and made all the noise they could with a belt of big bells. They had tied to their feet anklets of deer hoofs and wore around their waists belts of ostrich feathers and on their heads were diadems. One of them held in his hand a bunch of ostrich feathers.

Their dance consisted of a cadenced and half-jumping walk with slightly bent knees. Some dancers went forward or backward while others stayed in the same spot. During the ceremony the medicine-man received the help of another old man who was also squatting at the patient's side. He began muttering incantations and blowing on the sick man as hard as he could. After one hour of this utterly exhausting exercise, the medicine-man went to a pot full of rice which was carefully concealed by a sheet near the patient. He crouched under the sheet and recited in a supplicative voice a long incantation over the food. Afterwards he blew on the rice with all his strength. He then offered goodly portions of it to all who had taken part in the ceremony. Then the medicine-man went to two *caraguatá* bags full of dresses. He covered them with a cloth under which he crouched. He

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pronounced the same incantation, blew on the dresses which were unfolded and taken away. On the heap of dresses had been placed a gun wrapped in a red belt richly inlaid with shells. One of the dancers seized the gun and slinging it over his shoulder executed a dance bearing a certain likeness to the one he had done before. The dancers were relatives of the sick man, probably his sons.

b) *Treatment of Disease*

A rich woman who was seriously ill was cured by five renowned medicine men. A big open space of about fifteen feet square was cleared not far from her house. Wooden posts were erected and a sort of tent set up. One of the posts, about 20 feet high, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentine flag. Around the tent were placed the objects required by the disease, those which are supposed to please him, a mosquito net, a weaving loom, an old suitcase, pieces of gaudily colored cloth, a saddle, a soldier's coat, a lamp, a lance or a gun. A little further away fires were burning where the disease's food was being prepared and a pail of water was being heated for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a pile of hay and old rags. She had put on her best dress and was covered with ritual ornaments. The five shamans, who were old men, were equally adorned with feather belts, rattles, tropical helmets and other precious objects. The lower part of their faces was painted black.

There were also some twenty dancers wearing feathers, red belts adorned with shells, rattles, caps, red pieces of cloth, whistles and old broken watches, while perhaps ten old women ran about holding rags in their hands and one even held an umbrella. Everybody, including the sick person, danced and sang, at times the medicine-men and the sick woman stopped, they blew on her and the dancing was resumed. After a while the chief medicine-man whistled on

his bone flute and the dance stopped abruptly. The sick woman danced alone, lifting slowly one foot and then the other two or three inches above the ground, without moving from one spot. In the meantime two medicine-men shook their rattles. A man clapped his hands laughing, and others shook their rattle gourds. It lasted for about ten minutes, then the medicine-men joined the dance, but for a short time only. After a pause, two of them approached the sick woman and started undressing her. In the meantime another medicine-man was shaking his rattle all along her body, beginning with the head. All the ornaments were slowly removed, the assistants struck the ground at the place where these ornaments fell, and then picked them up and ran to throw them away. They shook them several times, then put them carefully in order. The sick woman sat up in the middle of her tent and was given a drink. The ceremony was interrupted, then resumed again. The entire ceremony lasted from the 20th to the 24th of March, every day from 8 to 11 o'clock and in the evening from 8 to 10 o'clock. Shots were fired every day in order to drive away the disease.

On the 26th of March another woman, who manifested the same symptoms as the first, was cured in the following way: The place already described was used, but the flag was removed and replaced with a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers and on top of the staff there was tied a large bunch of ostrich feathers. The staff itself was decorated with ritual belts, woolen belts trimmed with snail shell beads. On the cross-bars, which separated the tent from the village, offerings of the same type as for the preceding ceremony were placed. During the cure, the sick woman remained sitting the whole time on a pile of hay in the center of the tent, surrounded by four medicine-men and about ten dancers, and further away were six or seven women. All were adorned with ritual belts and bells and all were dancing and singing. A passage had been opened between the cross-bars which was meant as an exit for the disease. If someone

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stood in the entrance he did not prevent the disease from escaping but he did expose himself to contracting it.

At a signal from the chief medicine-men, the dancing was interrupted. Two men seized a white and red striped poncho by its extremities and began to dance, making side jumps legs parted. They went to the sick person and put the poncho on her, then they ran with it to the exit and shook it there. They repeated this several times, then they wrapped the woman from head to foot with the poncho and a medicine-man started rubbing her through the cloth, while everybody sang without dancing. After a while the twisted poncho was removed, taken to the exit and thrown away. Then the dance began again. An assistant sprinkled water on the ground and the chief medicine-man stopped the dance once more. He set down near the sick woman, covering himself entirely with a large black blanket and started speaking to the disease. In the meantine, the man who was moistening the ground brought a pail of water and with the assistance of one of the medicine-men he washed the face, head and body of the patient, then she was placed with her feet toward the exit. During the course of the dance, the assistant moistened the shoulders of the male dancers, while an old man painted the women's faces, making two red dots on their cheeks and a stripe along the nose. During this dance a medicine-man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a piece of red cloth. After a while the woman lay down and the dance went on, the paricipants assuming threatening expressions, then suddenly all looked very satisfied. The ceremony was interrupted, then after an hour's time it was resumed.

On the following day another woman was taken sick — but not such a rich one — and another treatment of a more modest character was undertaken. In front of the woman's house a tent was stretched and she was placed in the tent. The offerings consisted only of some pieces of cloth and a few bags. When I arrived the chief medicine-man was speak-

755 ing to the disease while an old woman, who was a magician, sang and blew on the patient. The others were talking among themselves without paying any attention to what was happening. After a pause, during which everybody drank some of the wine required by the disease, a singing man started to run around the patient, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine-man spoke once more with disease while the medicine-woman continued blowing on the patient and another medicine-man placed around the head of the patient front pages of illustrated papers and popular novels. The man who was running stopped and the chief medicine-man started talking with the others. Everybody sat down and drank some water, then two women began to walk rapidly around the others while they sang. One of them stopped and after a short while the other [535] one stopped too. Then all who were present started dancing. The dance was interrupted only by the coughing of the patient who seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. She actually died during the ceremony. Immediately after her [764] death the dance stopped. The old women ran about singing and shaking their rattles. Two men laid the dead woman on her right side and folded her legs and arms. They wrapped her in the pieces of cloth on which she had been lying and she was taken to her home. The medicine-men undressed quietly while the women of the family uttered lamentations.

c) *General Expulsion of Disease*

755 292 [534] The ceremony for general expulsion of disease took place early in the morning in the open air, far from all houses. It was performed by all the medicine-men of the village standing in a row. All were holding in their hands a rattle-gourd and a bone whistle. Some were provided with strips of cloth to which were attached rattles; the strips were worn across the chest or hung at the elbow. Others wore ceremonial shirts, some wore shirts made of *caraguatá* fiber and one

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on the sick woman. Then, as she seemed to have quited down, they started smoking and talking together. The possessed woman even accepted a cigarette. 755

Observations made by natives during the performance: The adornments are worn by the patient on behalf of the spirit who is fond of the colors. The songs and the noise of the bells are also intended to please the spirit who, charmed by the ornaments and the noise, gets quieter and leaves the patient. 755 776

During this treatment another group of about eight Indians were participating in a similar ceremony. They were dancing around a kind of improvised altar which consisted of a stick surrounded by four smaller ones forming a cross. The central stick was topped by palm leaves, the ends of which were wrapped in paper strips painted red. The four other sticks bore palm leaves painted red with the ends cut off. These sticks were inserted into wooden stands painted alternately red and black and connected in pairs by transverse rods. The whole structure was resting on some rags. A rolled poncho belonging to the medicine-man had been laid near the central stick. The ground for the ceremony had been carefully swept. According to my informant the central stick contained the injurious element which had caused the disease. That stick was supposed to be loaded with bad influences and I was warned not to touch it. 755 778

The dancers wore different costumes. Two of them had belts of ostrich feathers, and feather wreaths on their heads. In addition they wore bells and rattles on their breasts, around their loins and their ankles. Around their necks they wore necklaces of sea shells and in one hand they held a bunch of ostrich feathers. The other dancers wore their ordinary clothes with the exception of their headbands and the bells and feathers they wore on their ankles. 755 535 301

When I arrived they were dancing in a circle around the altar, from right to left, looking straight ahead. Their dance step might be defined as a jerky jog-trot. They accompanied 755 535

They accompanied
755 themselves with a very deep song, a sort of *heh, heh*, repeated
535 rhythmically but on different notes. When the dancers
[533] got tired they left the file without ceasing to sing, and after they had rested for a while they resumed their places.

The second part consisted of dancing couples. The dancers faced each other in twos and holding each other by the arm made side jumps, holding their legs parallel but slightly apart. Always moving from right to left they went several times round the altar, from time to time spinning themselves about. When they stopped to catch their breath one of them uttered a loud cry and started to dance alone, that is to say, making side jumps with parted and stiff legs, always facing the altar, although he whirled now and then. After spinning around twice he was joined by the others. They stopped dancing, sat down and one of them took off his ornaments. Another dancer covered himself entirely with a poncho and uttered his ë ë ë, always in the same tone. The medicine-man went to get the poncho he had left near the altar, he put it on the child and started to sing and to blow on the little patient. The dancer who had covered himself with the poncho kept silent, but remained under his cover. When the ceremony was over he began to sing.

a) *Treatment of a Man Possessed by a Spirit*

755 A man was caught by a spirit at about 9 P. M. He was decorated with red belts and placed in the center of the ceremonial ground. He was given two bells and in front of him were stuck three sticks, one of which about 2 yards long was totally covered with a rather dark cloth, the other two between 2½ and 3 feet high had rags and bunches of ostrich feathers fastened to their tops. The two medicine-men, wearing only belts of ostrich feathers and holding in their hands metal rattles, were standing by the side of the patient. A little further away were two assistants (probably

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relatives of the patient) and three dancers. All wore rattles. 755

The medicine-men sang and blew on the patient, who shook the bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in one place and let their rattles jingle. The dancers then started to run from left to right and thus made a complete circle. For the second turn, when they arrived at the height of the sticks, they reversed and ran around in the opposite direction, then reversed again and so on. While the assistants were stamping their feet, singing and shaking their rattles, the medicine-men went on singing and blowing. The patient had not moved during the dance. After they had run around ten times, the dancers went to rest, smoke and talk with the assistants, but the medicine-men still blew and shook their rattles. The patient was still motionless. After a quarter of an hour the dance was resumed, this time to the accompaniment of the patient's bells and rattles which all present were shaking. All seemed to be rather happy. The ceremony was then over and they sat down to smoke. The sticks were removed and the ornaments taken off, first those of the medicine-men, then the assistants and dancers, and finally those of the patient. The patient returned quietly to his hut. 755 535

XV. Sexual Life

Before marriage nothing prevents young people from having a free sexual life. The girls paint their faces red if they have had sexual intercourse the preceding night. 836 302

In love affairs before marriage it is always the women who take the initiative. 836

If a man has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman his loins and head will ache. As for the woman, she is in no danger. 833 841

You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. 834 828

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with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

533 into a walk, the right foot moving first and the left one being
535 slowly brought up to it. The direction of the walk is always from left to right. The rhythm of the song becomes more and more accelerated, transforming itself into a rather rapid running, always in the same direction, the right foot stamping heavily on the ground thus marking the time. After fifteen minutes more or less, the dancers stop at a signal given by their leader, then begin again.

535 2. The dancers stand in two equal lines facing each other with their arms resting on their neighbor's shoulders. Between the two files the leader stands alone. When he gives a signal both files begin moving and singing. One of the files goes toward the other while the latter withdraws at a slow trot. In the meantime the leader runs between the files and along them, going more quickly than the dancers. Each time he runs around twice he points out a dancer in one of the files, who then moves rapidly toward the opposite file, choses a dancer and draws him out. Gradually the total number of dancers diminishes. When there are only three left, the leader nods to one of the remaining three, telling him to choose a dancer in the opposite file, then the game goes on in the opposite direction.

3. The dancers form two or more files, standing one behind the other, holding each other by the waist, singing and shouting. They start running, each file trying to dislodge the other line and throw down the dancers, being careful themselves not to be separated. In order to defend themselves the files run beside each other and when they think the time has come they try to cut the others off and throw disorder into the opposite side.

4. This dance begins like the first one, the difference being that the dancers' hands rest on the shoulders and not on the hips. Once the circle has started running it is broken up suddenly at one point and divided into several files that first stamp and then start running, forming a spiral which grows tighter and tighter. When they stand so close together

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that all movement is impossible except to stamp, the spiral begins to unfold itself, first very slowly, then more and more quickly. The dancers are sometimes many. The circle divides into two files which develop simultaneously on both sides of the enclosure.

5. The young men form a file from the center of the dance enclosure to the outer border. Each dancer puts his hand on the shoulder of one neighbor and his other hand on the hip of his other neighbor. The file starts slowly to move; the man in the center whirls himself in a circle and the others follow the movement. The movement is faster toward the outer ends of the file and is accompanied by songs. Sometimes the singing stops but the movement goes on, then the singing starts again.

From time to time the dance is interrupted by a young man following a girl. After they have been running through the dancing place of the village they ordinarily sleep together and on the following day appear with their faces painted red.

According to my informant the dancing songs have no meaning, being mere rhythmic utterances.

XIX. Mourning Rites

A man is buried in the bush in a grave about six feet deep immediately after dying. The dead are buried reclining on their right sides with their faces toward their fields. If they were placed in any other position they could not find the way to their houses and they would become lost. No food is given to the dead except a calabash half filled with water. The soul drinks this water to quench his thirst during his journey to the underworld. All the personal belongings of the deceased are burned and their souls come out to join the soul of their owner. His animals are not killed, but when they die their souls join that of their master.

Immediately after death all grown up members of the deceased, even very remote relatives, begin to weep, ac-

764 companying themselves on rattles and drums. These laments last for about one hour after death, then begin again when the corpse is carried away to be buried and finally when they come back from the burial. But on the following day only very near relatives parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, go on weeping. Those who were already mourning for someone else weep louder than the others because they mourn for two.

765 The laments take place at sunrise and at sunset as well as in the middle of the afternoon. During the first days of mourning the near relatives of the deceased go to his home to mourn. There they run and dance, going continually [535] from one place to another and shaking their rattles with both hands. They accompany the dance with lamentations. With the exception of the wife of the deceased, women always mourn in this way, shaking rattles, dancing and lamentations. Mourning women must not appear bareheaded or with a naked face for they ought not to be seen. People [533] sing and play on rattles during the mourning period in order that the dead person may readily be forgotten. The laments which last two or three hours every day are supposed to help the living forget the dead. After six months, more or less, they weep only at dawn and even then very rarely. [302] The relatives of the dead person must cut off their hair in order not to displease the dead who would attack their heads and make them bald. The wife, at the death of her husband, observes mourning for two years. She shuts herself up in a special little hut often adjoining the hut of her married son, or daughter if she has no son.

768 The house of the deceased is pulled down and a new one built about 10 yards away. If this were not done the dead man would come back within fourteen days after death, attracted by memories of his previous life. The materials of the old house are used in the construction of the new one.

A widow may leave her home to satisfy her wants only at night. If she goes out during the day the dead man gets

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Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caragsaid* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aloja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *mutshe;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithlí*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklanék*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
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5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [847] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *anutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

family suspected that she had taken the fruit although she showed none of the usual symptoms. One of her sons asked the missionary for help. As soon as she realized she had been discovered, she jumped up and vehemently denied having taken poison. The son insisted that she had and that she was trying to deceive her family and the missionary. To make sure that she was in no danger, the missionary decided to give her an emetic. The old woman struggled violently, throwing off everyone who approached her; only after an hour's strenuous fight was she overcome and forced to take the purge. Of course her stomach contained large quantities of the poison, which she had timed very carefully to take effect early in the morning when everyone would be deep in sleep and, therefore, unaware of her condition. Had it not been for her son's persistence, she undoubtedly would have been found dead the next day. Her husband, who was devoted to her, appeared to be quite unconcerned and, had the matter been left with him, would have done nothing to save her.

In general, love affairs are said to be the main cause of these suicides. They are particularly frequent on the occasions of the nightly dances which are closely connected with the sexual life of the Matako and at such times may take epidemic proportions. A young man will take poison for some reason and soon after others follow suit. Asked why they try to kill themselves, they explain that they feel compelled to do so by some superior force. The fruit attracts them; the desire to eat it becomes an obsession. When they walk in the bush their attention becomes riveted upon the fruit, which they see everywhere, until the temptation becomes too strong and they eat it.

Young boys at school are quite likely to take poison when they have been scolded by their teacher. For this reason the missionaries must exercise particular care to avoid offense when the poisonous fruit is ripe and, consequently, especially dangerous.

Actually there is a great deal of ostentation in these suicides. It is likely that many who take poison, do not take a fatal dose. Those who really wish to die generally take the poison secretly and try to conceal the fact until it is too late to help them. The others, on the contrary, boast about what they have done and are willing, even eager to get medical treatment.

This mania also has its simulators and fakers. Certain individuals imitate all the clinical symptoms, —convulsions, foaming, etc.— without having tasted the deadly fruit. Here again the desire to show off, to be the center of attention is foremost. Every suicide attempt provokes turmoil in the village and everyone flocks to the house where

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

762 the victim awaits death. It is said that some men take poison to blackmail a woman into complying with their wishes.

It has been noticed time and again that only young people eat sachasandia as a rule. Among the cases cited above there is only one of an elderly woman who attempted to take her life. In this connection, the question arises of whether suicides are more common among women than among men. No data on this point have been gathered, but it is the impression of the missionaries that suicide is equally common among men and women with perhaps a slight majority among women. The first problem raised by the frequency of these suicides is whether the suicides are caused by new conditions of life —by culture clash and lack, of adjustment to a new world— or whether they were equally frequent formerly when the native culture still functioned? Since no Matako group now lives in its earlier surroundings, the truth of the matter will be difficult to learn. If the problem is presented to the missionaries who are largely responsible for the disappearance of the Indian culture, they always insist that suicides were one of the worst manifestations of the culture before the Indians were saved. They point out, moreover, that the number of suicides was particularly high at the time when the missionaries began their work in the region, and they establish a close relation between suicide and dancing. One of the missionaries wrote to me: "In the old days when the Indians were still dancing, there used to be as many as a dozen attempted suicides in one day, resulting in my being up most of the night going from one to another. They were so many and so frequent, however, and it happened so long ago that I can remember none in detail". This evidence is confirmed by other missionaries who recall that the worst epidemics always occured in connection with the night dances which have a decidedly sexual character. At such times young married men who took part in the entertainments slept with girls, thus arousing the jealousy of their wives and the anger of their mothers-in law. If as a result one or two people committed suicide, others would follow their example.

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The link established between night dances and suicide was the main reason for the strict tabu against dancing which is now enforced in every mission. Indians have been made so aware of the evil of dancing that even little girls have been kept from their normal and charming jumping about. Missionaries, however, are not responsible for this measure; it has been self-imposed by the Indians.

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No cases of suicide are known among other tribes who live in the same region and under similar conditions. At any rate, I have never

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755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mɨsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[531] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

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755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was [533] [535] resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[774] [776] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

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(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

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755 554 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments. [292] [301] [302] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in 755 554 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women 535 were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine 755 554 men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

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755 The whole ceremony lasted from March 20 to March 24,
554 every day from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. and from 8 to 10 P.M.
Each day at the end of the ceremony a shot was fired to frighten the illness.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(March 26, 1933)

755 On March 26 another woman who had the same symptoms of illness as the preceding one was treated in the following manner: the site already described was used, but the flag was replaced by a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers, and a thick tuft of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the post. The staff was decorated with ritual belts. Offerings of the same type as those for the preceding ceremony were placed on the crossbars which separated the tent from the village.
755 During the entire ceremony the sick woman remained seated
535 /216/ on a bale of hay in the center of the tent; right next to her were four of the great medicine men, a little farther away about ten young dancers, and then a final circle of six or seven women. All the officiants, adorned as usual with feathers, ritual belts, and little bells, danced and sang. A passage was
[123] contrived in the separating crossbars, and, as I insisted on it, a medicine man came to tell me that this opening was intended to let the illness out; I asked him if my presence would prevent it from going out; he told me no, but that I was running the risk that it would enter me at the moment it left the body of the sick woman.

The dance was halted at a sign from the chief medicine man, and two men, taking a poncho, striped red and white, by its ends, began to dance, jumping sideways, legs open; then

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755 they approached the sick woman and passed the poncho over her
536 head; next they ran to the exit and shook it. They repeated this maneuver several times, then completely enveloped the woman in the poncho, and a medicine man began to rub her through the cloth. Everyone was singing but some were not dancing. After some time the poncho was taken off, carried at a running pace to the exit, and thrown outside. The dance was resumed; an assistant threw some water on the ground, and the chief medicine man then stopped the dance again. He sat next to the sick woman, covering himself completely with a large black blanket, and began to speak with the illness; during this time the man who was watering the ground carried up a bucket of water and, with the help of a medicine man, washed the face, head, and body of the sick woman, who was turned with her feet toward the passage made in the crossbars, and a path was traced with water from her feet to the passage. The chief medicine man got up and the dance was resumed with renewed
[302] ardor. During this dance the assistant moistened the shoulders of the male dancers, while an old man painted the faces of the women red, giving them two circles on the cheek bones and a streak along the nose. At the same time one medicine man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a red cloth. At the end of a certain time the sick woman lay down, the dance continued, taking on a threatening character, and then suddenly the people appeared satisfied, having undoubtedly obtained a momentary success. The ceremony stopped and was resumed after an hour.

Note

[164] [132] According to the medicine men with whom I had a chance to talk about these two sick women, they were suffering from "sickness in the chest," /217/ easily explicable by a sharp atmospheric drop of almost 25° in 24 hours.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

115 old—the oldest Indian in the mission I believe. Esteemed by everyone, he had developed a consciousness of his respectability that was sometimes a bit comic. He spoke with poise, choosing elegant and sophisticated words the meanings of which he never really understood. His language was a slight parody on the affected speech of certain colonists. In his youth he had lived with his tribe which was still independent of and untouched by European civilization, but later in life, like many intelligent Indians, he deemed it useful and convenient to join the white settlers for a while. He was among the first natives to help the missionaries and became one of the first and best Christians of the Missions. Martin's long contact with mestizo settlers and later with missionaries made of him an informant of lesser value than Pedro. His tales were generally twisted so that they would fit to the new type of living which had developed in Martin's community. In working with me he tried to rationalize the old lore of his tribe as if I were a colonist with no experience in Indian ways. However, his contribution is valuable because he was an old man extremely well informed in primitive customs of his tribe.

177 538 Martin's tales are not all Indian, although I expressed to him several times my desire to have only native lore. He told me many tales of distinctly European origin. He always insisted that they were known by other Indians and consequently were genuine. As some of these European tales had been told my be Pedro who also denied their foreign source, one may consider them as having been incorporated into the modern folklore of the Indians. Often Indian elements as well as Indian characters in such tales (for instance, the Rainbow playing the part of an Ogre) point out that European motifs have been worked up by the native story tellers and readjusted to the environment. For that reason I feel that tales of recent introduction should not be neglected. They may give precious hints as to the diffusion of European stories among the natives of America, and indicate the way they have been integrated into native culture. The intro-

3: Metraux .E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

duction of these tales to the Matako is quite recent since the Indians have been in regular touch with white settlers for only thirty or forty years.

The most important character in the Matako tales is familiar to all students of North American ethnology — he is the Trickster. His Matako name is *Takxwax*, *Tokxwax* or *Tawkxwax*, according to the region. The last form which I have adopted is used at Algarrobal, near Embarcación. My two informants agreed that *Tawkxwax* was a »loco» a fool and by this word they meant a practical joker, a person who likes to play harmful tricks on people. The bad people in the region were always referred to as »locos». The adventures of *Tawkxwax* strongly suggest those of the famous tricksters of North American ethnology. The resemblance is even more accentuated in the tales of other tribes. In the mythology of the Toba Pilagá the tricks or the adventures are attributed to the fox who is the South American equivalent of the Coyote. The perfect parallels between the stories concerning *Tawkxwax* and those in which the fox is the hero are so numerous and striking that I often tried to make the Matako confess that *Tawkxwax* was the fox of the other tribes. They always denied my identification and insisted that *Tawkxwax* was a man.

Everyone familiar with North American folklore will recognize in these tales many similarities between the Chaco tales and those which constitute the rich oral literature of North American tribes. I am too little acquainted with North American ethnology to draw parallels but no doubt they are numerous. The essential part played by the Trickster in mythology is a feature which cannot be neglected. Parallels between North American and South American Indian tales will be more obvious when I am able to issue the mythology of the Toba Pilagá that I had the opportunity to study more systematically and thoroughly than the Matako. The Matako mythology is only a short introduction to a more rich and complete material.

I was able to come upon among the Matacos was this attempt at 533
a poetic song, sung goodness only knows how, by the squaws. However, in spite of its failings it does reveal the use of rime:

Bonica nambonica [539]
Se-le-ctié-nó:
Bonica, bonica,
Nambonica, nambonica.

which means: I like, I do not like you to embrace me.
I like, I like, I do not like, I do not like.

They have no dances; those violent gallopings about in a 535
circle holding hands can hardly be called dancing. They are chaste, however, when they do dance, and if men and women happen to be at a dance together each sex forms its own separate circle, one within the other, but without touching.

In a word, everything pertaining to the imagination, every- 181
thing coming under the heading of religion, poetry or dance, can be said to be completely lacking among these savages.

[217] Chapter XIII

Social Matters (continued)

But if they have no imagination are they not also heartless and insensitive? It has repeatedly been said and written that the bonds of kinship are not at all close and easily severed among the Indians, and this "fact" has apparently been picked up not from observation but by analogy based on the absence of the family and the existence of concubinage.

I am afraid that this is going too far. We are accustomed to and molded by our Christian tradition, which, by the way, is an exception to the immense majority of other cultural traditions, an exception which is paid for in part by pretense and infidelity, and the barefaced immorality which is prostitution.

It seems to us that if a woman is not joined to a man by all the sacraments of the church, and if she is not his only wife, then there results a shrivelling in all the finer feelings.

3: Metraux
539, 773

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[For myths and folklore, see pp. 9-89, category 116.]

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The Indians have great faith in the power of their a'hót. One of my Indian guides, Tajo ["slash" --Translator] by name (so called because he had a scar on his face) in order to prove to me the indubitable power of the a'hóts, and the crass ignorance of the whites who deny their existence, told me the following:

"It happened that a tribe was returning from a sugar plantation in the province of Salta. It was the season of algarrobo pods and one night all the people were celebrating, singing and dancing. Suddenly they became aware of the approach of a white man who was singing -- they could hear the noise made by the horse's hooves and by the large silver spurs.

"As soon as he arrived at the place where the people were gathered he halted and began to scold them for what they were doing, wishing to put a stop to their activity. The people did not like the white man's interference and said to the hayagüe ["witch doctor"--Translator] that he make him go away. The hayagüe, unable to bring this about by peaceful means said to the white who was insisting on stopping and profaning the celebration:

"'Now you will see if we are useless people and how strong is the a'hót.' He bent down, covered himself and shouted to the a'hót. 'Strike the white man down with an arrow and make him see if it is true that we are worthless people.' 'It is well,' answered the a'hót.

"Immediately a sound was heard coming up from beneath the ground, like the snapping of a stick. It was an arrow which had struck home. The white man suddenly slumped from off his horse. He was dead. The a'hót had shot the arrow into him because the white man had not wanted to believe in the a'hót."

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The whole tribe swears to have witnessed the whole thing.

It is remarkable that the object, if not of worship then at least of recognition, be of an evil nature; for in the last analysis the a'hót is nothing [203] if not an evil power or one capable of evil. If we wish to consider such a recognition as the first glimmering of a religion, then we must confess that religion has as its base, fear of evil and the desire to command it.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

the mother, these are at once set down as the operation of evil spirits. The parents, especially the father, are released from the restriction laid upon them by custom as soon as the child is assumed to have become independent of the physical and mental constitution of its parents.

Among the Chaco Indians, there does not exist any ceremonies corresponding to our baptism, but a *name* is always given the new-born child. The Chaco Indians name their children after animals, birds, reptiles (for instance Bird, Alligator, Lizard), or after bodily peculiarities observed in the child (for instance: Tsihnilak, »Paunchy», a Choroti name), but the names seem on the whole to be given at random and not with the same discrimination which is the rule among some Indians of tropical South America. There is however one peculiar feature to be noted in this respect: the reluctance generally displayed by the Indians to mention their real names. I very rarely heard the Indians using each other's names in their daily conversations, and if one wished to find out the name of a certain Indian, this was as a rule extremely difficult. When a Choroti, a Mataco, or a Toba went to the settlements of the whites to work, he usually assumed a special European name for that time. Such names they never had any objection to mentioning, but they were extremely unwilling to tell me their proper native names. Only on certain occasions — for instance, at the drinking-feasts when all were in high spirits and very good friends — did it happen that the Indians told me one another's names. The native name, received in early childhood, is the real name and is to a certain degree taboo. To reveal it is a perilous thing, especially if the individual *himself* does it. It is to put oneself wholly in the power of an unknown stranger and wilfully to expose oneself to mysterious dangers.

As we shall find later on, the names of the dead are particularly taboo.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112

men abstain from eating fish for some time after the death of a near relation.

Apart from the custom of cutting the hair neither the Tobas nor other Pilcomayo tribes nowadays practise ceremonial mutilations of any kind. Formerly however, as the Tobas told me, they practised the following mourning custom. When a woman died, her eldest son had to cut off one of his finger nails. The nail was fastened to a string and hung round the neck of a dog, which was thereafter driven away. If the son omitted to do this, it was believed that the soul of the woman would enter into the nail and kill him in the shape of a tiger into which it would transform itself. This could be prevented by sending away the nail. The dog carrying it away would meet some other tribesman into which the soul would enter and thus become harmless. for the spirits of the dead are harmful only to the nearest relatives. The Indian who told me this added that the custom is no longer practised by the Tobas, because nowadays it very seldom happens that people are killed by tigers and thus the belief that women are changed into such beasts after death has lost its foundation. This again, according to the Indian belief, is owing to the fact that the medicine-men are now able to provide against such sad eventualities by their incantations and conjurations.

As to the explanation of these observances, we have already seen that the abstention from eating fish is due to the idea that the death-demon may possibly hide in the fish and gain entrance into the body. Of special interest are the mourning customs relating to hair and nails. Hair-cutting as a mourning practice of women is met with among most South American Indians and — like other kinds of mutilation — are essentially purification ceremonies of purely magical significance. In the hair and the nails according to primitive belief the vital power of the human body is concentrated. One who possesses these essential parts of a person's body is believed to possess his soul, through which he will be able to exert magical influence upon him. If this is so, it is conceivable that invisible supernatural enemies would take particular interest in these parts. Consequently, when a woman is in a delicate situation, she takes the precaution to remove and destroy these critical parts of her body. According to Indian belief, women are always more exposed to supernatural dangers than men, and therefore have to be more careful in every respect.

The fear of the dead is also manifested in that their *names* are forbidden to be mentioned. This is another general superstition among the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Chaco tribes. These savages as a rule are very reluctant to mention their true Indian names. Thus, as I have mentioned before, when the Chaco Indians visit the whites they nearly always assume names for use instead of their real names. If the Indians are thus careful with the names of the living, those of the dead are particularly regarded as taboo and must never be mentioned, especially by the nearest relatives. When I asked one of my Indian friends about the name of a man who had just died, he hesitated for a moment, looked round, and when he saw that no one of the relatives was near, he *whispered* the name in my ear. This superstition, I believe, is ultimately based on the idea, held by all Indians, that *the soul of a person is inherent in his name*. To know a person's name is therefore the same as to have his soul in one's power, and supernatural influences can be exerted upon him through this invisible part of his personality, just as they can be exerted through a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail. If the soul is believed to be in the name, we can easily understand why the names of the dead are especially taboo. To mention it is the same as to enter into close contact with the departed soul itself, to which the infection of death is attached, and this is supposed to entail unfortunate consequences, at least for the nearest relatives. For an outsider there is evidently not the same personal danger. But since a person may be controlled and conjured through his name, it is further believed that the rest of the dead in the grave may be disturbed by mentioning his name. It is therefore considered a dreadful indiscretion against the relatives to speak of the deceased by name. This is the idea prevailing both among the Tobas and among other Chaco tribes. Generally the Indians do not like to speak about the dead at all, and if they do, their tacit maxim is: *de mortuis nil nisi bene*. The relatives would never admit that they fear a dead parent and regard him as malicious. They always pronounce him to be »good«, as if believing that by such a euphemism they may change his character or paralyse the harmful effects arising from him.

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881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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As we shall find later on, the names of the *dead* are particularly taboo.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLo̱t*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hapʔap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

C M 175 411 [111] from the body without making the wound much longer because a barb is carved into it and this impedes its being drawn out. If they have time they invariably decapitate those of their enemies whom they wound in battle, and they do this with great dexterity as they find the joint between the vertebrae in a moment and sever the head with one slash of their knives made from the jawbone of the "palometa" [a vicious type of fish which also goes by the name of "piraña"--Translator]. After the head has been severed the scalp is removed and then stretched and dried, and kept in order to celebrate their more important fiestas and to demonstrate their bravery.

C M 175 492 "They used, in the old days, to go about on foot, but they have since become great horsemen having stolen large numbers of horses from the ranches and towns of the Spaniards. From the city of Santa Fé alone and in the space of only 20 years they have made off with some 15,000 horses. That is why they are such good riders today, surpassing the Spaniards. Running after a fleeing horse and using only their lances to help them off the ground they will leap upon it and mount either from the side or from behind. They do not use stirrups and their saddles are very meager affairs, so much so that they often ride saddleless, but so swiftly that only rarely can the Spanish overtake them for they make their horses fly by whipping them with a three tailed lash which they always carry with them. When on the warpath they are happy with but skimpy rations which each carries for himself, and they make fun of the many preparations which the Spaniards make since they, with a small amount of half-grilled meat and whatever they can glean from the countryside in the way of fruit or other things undertake treks of a hundred leagues to wage war, their bed being the hard ground or at most a stiff cowhide. But this is nothing unusual for them since their beds are hardly of better stuff when they are at home.

C M 175 513 534 "These latter are made of straw which is spread all over the floor of their habitation which, although low-ceilinged, is very long in order to allow room for the whole family group to stretch out, each family having its own fire in the center. The oldest lies down [576] at the head in the place of greatest prestige and then, on either side, his sons according to age, followed by the grandchildren and other descendents, each with their families in such a manner that the way in which they lie down to sleep is a living representation of the family tree. They have no covering other than the branches and grasses with which they thatch their hovels, and in which [redacted]rns continually. The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

756 or dies from purely natural causes. So when a person becomes sick or has any pain, the sorcerer is immediately called to take away the pain or to restore health. And let no one think that the sorcerer (witchdoctor) must feel the pulse of the sick person or make him stick out his tongue or confuse him and his relatives with the many questions with which our doctors confuse us—no, this would seem to them to be an admission of ignorance and furthermore, highly impertinent; nor do they cudgel their brains to find the cause of the infirmity or care whether there be herbs or special remedies to combat it—not at all, for it would only be a waste of time. Their method of effecting a cure is more simple. The patient having said that he feels pain in such and such a place, the witchdoctor does nothing other than to place his hands on the affected part, but he places them together and half-closed, in such a way that they are in the shape of a hollow vessel, exactly as when boys, with half-closed hands wish to imitate the sound of a trumpet or horn. And with their hands in that way, they begin to blow through [605] them with all the lung power at their command, accompanying the puffing with groans and howls, and persevering in this for hours on end, repeating the ceremony with greater or less frequency according to the state of the invalid and the possibility of payment for their work. Those who have nothing must yet give something to the witchdoctor, and those who have possessions must determine to give all of them to him, and they do so. Some however appear to doubt or at least to mistrust the witchdoctor's ability, for although they will give him all he asks for beforehand, they force him to return everything if his treatment is not efficacious. The one who is most fortunate in the recovery of his patients is the one who acquires most prestige, and he makes a good living. If the patient gets worse, and the witchdoctors see that he is going to die they usually declare him beyond recovery and abandon him in order not to lose prestige, and make excuse as to the incurability of the disease by claiming that some more powerful evil power is acting against him.

[763] Often, if the witchdoctor who states that the patient is past hope is of some fame, the relatives of the patient will take the sick man out to the burial grounds while he is still alive, will dig his grave, choke him to death and bury him. When, on the other hand, one of their leaders or some person of great influence or having many relatives or who is generally well liked becomes seriously ill or is close to death, then there is usually a consultation or general gathering of all the

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756 witchdoctors of the vicinity, who never declare the man beyond re-
554 covery but bend their every effort in making a great show of their ridiculous and childish practices in order to make death keep away. Gathered, then, in the invalid's hut, they stand about him at some little distance in a semicircle and do not take their eyes off him but observe his every movement with care. They begin to blow and gesture with their hands, now forcefully and with verve, now slowly and softly according as they see that the patient seems more fatigued or gets back some of his strength; and all this in order to pretend that they see death approaching and are trying to chase it away. In the
[533] same manner they begin to sing in base, funereal tones an air similar to a continuous harsh howling, and, being guided by the condition of the invalid they modify their expressions, gestures and tone of voice. The stricken person for his part always tries, by means of his fatigue, his cries or moans, his frightened eyes and perturbed expression to let the others know what he is feeling and the state he considers himself to be in; and the witchdoctors, following these obvious signs, gesticulate more or less, blow and howl with greater or less softness [606] or loudness, come close and hurl themselves wildly towards the invalid or gently fall back a short distance. When it seems that the sick man is about to die they come at a bound so close to him, heightening their gestures to such a pitch and howling so unceasingly and in such broken, forced and hoarse tones, with eyes so wide open and fearful and with so many expressions of terror, that anyone could easily be led to believe that they do in fact see death in the guise of some deformed and terrible figure and that they wish to frighten it, make it flee or seize it. All this is done so seriously and naturally that no one would suspect them of perpetrating a hoax or deceiving; but the fact is that even if the invalid were still able to live for a while, terror would soon finish him off."

"The witchdoctors are also believed to have the power to drive away and make disappear plagues and calamities such as smallpox, which wreaks havoc among them; the lack of water or its excess and other things. To this end the witchdoctors meet, go off a little way from the camp and, seated upon the ground, like so many Jeremiahs, begin to sing their lamentations, without words of course, accompanying
[534] the sad song with the choc-que-choc produced by the coming together of small stones placed in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

In order to gather together in a common place, in addition to the tracks they leave they twist branches and handsful of grass at crossroads in order that their companions may know where to find them, they having prearranged the meaning of the signs. 487 201

[193] Another means of communication is by making fires. During our traveling about the Chaco we were continually surrounded by fires, either at close quarters or far away, fires which sometimes took on the proportions of colossal blazes. And often, when we thought that we were in absolute solitude, it would happen that upon approaching an Indian village we would be informed that we were expected, and we would hear tell of the order which had been observed in our march. 202

They make use, moreover, of many spies and informers. In Mataco the former are called niguaiecque, and the latter gu'éicáss. 701 [203]

They apparently do have some sort of tactical organization: thus they have a general chief, subordinate chief and petty chieftains. The first is called, in Mataco, canniat tizán, the second, canniat, and as for the last, I have forgotten.

The general chiefs are chosen at second remove, that is, from among the subordinate chiefs, who, in turn, are elected by the people. Normally a marked preference is shown for the late chief's sons, provided they be of age, courageous and good. But then, of course, we must say that in these elections the same passions are present which appear amongst us in our elections.

They also have another category of persons, whom they call nyát and corresponds vaguely to the Spanish "caballero" or the "galantuomo" of southern Italy. So it is that they refer to any white persons whom they consider of quality with the name nyát. It is to be supposed that a like distinction is made among the other Indians. In Perú and wherever the Quechua language is spoken, gentlemen are called Viracocha. [554] [609]

Once the general chief has been elected the subordinate elector chiefs go to call on him when they can, which visits are celebrated with the accustomed drinking and eating orgies. A general chieftainship almost always embraces villages far removed from each other.

The Matacos call those who visit them tzicki-ác.

The authorities among the Chaco Indians play an almost purely military role. In peace time they lose practically all their prestige,

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do, or in white garments as do the Chinese, but they show in their own way that they are in mourning by shaving their heads which are the only parts of their bodies with covering. The women, instead of parading themselves about in their somber garb in churches and public places, hide themselves away in their huts and avoid all contact with their neighbors; they refrain absolutely from talking and apply themselves more diligently to their household duties. They continue in this mourning for a year, during which time it is not proper for them to remarry. Whenever they must needs go out they take the most secluded paths and if one should chance to meet them they cover their faces; they will not talk on any account and avoid any occasion for doing so. It happened that travelers [208] who have met up by chance in out-of-the-way and therefore suspect places, with women like these who are withdrawn and will not speak, have mistreated and even killed them, being ignorant of the custom.

In addition to shaving their heads they also wail -- a monotonous expressionless chant -- which is apparently dictated by convention and accompanied by the beating of the "pin-pin" which, as I believe I have already said, is a mortar hollowed out of a tree trunk with a tool or with fire. Water is poured into this mortar and then a skin is stretched tightly over it to form a sort of drum. They beat upon this skin with a gourd filled with grains of corn or algarrobo seeds.

They wail in unison at certain stipulated hours, but the widow or mother does so without ceasing, even when she walks through the streets about her business. Relatives and friends accompany the deceased to the grave, and if he be a well loved chief or some famous witch doctor then the whole tribe will go.

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Chiefs and particularly famous witch doctors occupy positions of honor among the a'hot who await them, and their influence in the spirit world will be in proportion to the esteem in which they were held by their neighbors of which the funeral rites will be a yardstick. And so when one of them dies the Indians who are gathered about his bier beg him to bend every effort in their favor when he is far off among the a'hót, and try to influence the storm a'hot and the plague a'hot or the famine a'hot to pardon their villages and visit their enemies. The dying

man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a'hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

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or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter.

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aittáh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men.

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*.

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat.

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *M a t a c o* and the *C h o r o t i* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter
[606] of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say,
[182] but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

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755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was [533] resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the [535] rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[774] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the [776] images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

755
554

(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

/214 cont./

755 554 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments. [292 301 302] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in 755 554 535 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a 755 554 stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

/215 cont./

755 The whole ceremony lasted from March 20 to March 24,
559 every day from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. and from 8 to 10 P.M.

Each day at the end of the ceremony a shot was fired to frighten the illness.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(March 26, 1933)

755 On March 26 another woman who had the same symptoms of illness as the preceding one was treated in the following manner: the site already described was used, but the flag was replaced by a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers, and a thick tuft of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the post. The staff was decorated with ritual belts. Offerings of the same type as those for the preceding ceremony were placed on the crossbars which separated the tent from the village.

755 During the entire ceremony the sick woman remained seated
535 /216/ on a bale of hay in the center of the tent; right next to her were four of the great medicine men, a little farther away about ten young dancers, and then a final circle of six or seven women. All the officiants, adorned as usual with feathers, ritual belts, and little bells, danced and sang. A passage was
[123] contrived in the separating crossbars, and, as I insisted on it, a medicine man came to tell me that this opening was intended to let the illness out; I asked him if my presence would prevent it from going out; he told me no, but that I was running the risk that it would enter me at the moment it left the body of the sick woman.

The dance was halted at a sign from the chief medicine man, and two men, taking a poncho, striped red and white, by its ends, began to dance, jumping sideways, legs open; then

/217 cont./

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [551] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned with what was going on. After an interruption, during which [273] everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [752 756] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

462 Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception.

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chaguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

595 A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only 422 556 wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have.

586 Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families.

because he was so tall, and the Matacos called Quiatzutaj, which means Vilelón (large Vilela Indian--Translator), because of his national origin and size, when I asked him how things were going with him replied: "Well...I...I rich...I having...much... algarrobo pods...I rich." They are miserly with these pods and with aloja, to the extent that they will not barter them except on very rare occasions. Only in a niggardly way and half heartedly will they invite anyone to share their aloja. 824 [556]

One morning I came upon a group of some forty Indians who were sitting around a yuchan of aloja. When I made my appearance and as soon as they recognized me they all began to shout: "John, John...yúc-cu-ás...yúc-cu-ás" (tobacco, tobacco), and I answered "hué-ni-tdé: niquiolá pac" (I have none, later I shall give you some). Only then did they invite me to drink with them and at my first refusal did not insist a second time, the chief saying to me -- "No my child...no...we...taking...you giving...tobacco." This was by way of politeness, in the Indian manner to be sure, but politeness nonetheless. I, to please them, made some effort to speak a few words to them in their own language and finally took my leave saying: "Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet...nutpinlá pac...niquioc-la yuc-cu-as..." (Goodbye, I am going home...I shall come back right away...I shall give tobacco). And all of them, full of pleasure because I spoke to them in their language and promised them tobacco shouted: "Amecná... amecná...tapil...ccaelitt (Goodbye, goodbye, come back soon). I returned after two or three hours with my pockets bursting with cut tobacco [190] and found all of them still drinking. As soon as they saw me they reminded me of my promise, which I thought they might have forgotten amidst the fumes of drunkenness. I distributed it to them and even when it was all gone they kept on asking me for more, upon which I turned my pockets inside out and shouted to them "namhuen, namhuen" (I have no more). They, satisfied with the eloquence of my demonstration, gave up their clamoring saying hée hée, which means "well, well"; but they forgot to offer me another drink of aloja. 123 574

While on the subject of greetings: these Indians have the custom of tapping the chest of their guests lightly and amicably with their half-closed fist, accompanying these caresses with expressions of good fellowship such as hée, hée, etc. -- (Good, good! etc.). 576

261
or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556●
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

upon as perfectly natural, and since full reciprocity exists, such an act of apparent liberality does not even evoke feelings of gratitude in those who for the moment are the objects of it. Those who have been travelling and therefore have not produced crops, or those who for some other reason have no means of subsistence for the time being, have a claim on the hospitality of their fellow-tribesmen. Even when there is nowhere a real want the successful hunter or fisher gladly shares his abundance of food with other families of the village, knowing that others will do the same to him on another occasion.

Native law enjoins hospitality not only to fellow-tribesmen but also to members of foreign tribes with which the Indians stand on a friendly footing. The same hospitality and liberality is shown to a white man whom the Indians regard as their friend. For my own part I frequently had, both among the Tobas and the Choroti, personal experience of this Indian hospitality.

In spite of the liberality which appears in the relations of the different members of the community to one another, private property is strictly respected in all the tribes. We can particularly speak of »socialism» in regard to the *land*, which, as I have mentioned before, is considered to belong to the people in general; no Indian, not even a chief, has a direct claim to any part of it above his fellows. The flocks of sheep and goats feed on the common pasture. Similarly the natural products of the country, such as game, fish, wild fruit, honey, and fire-wood, are common property. But as soon as an individual family has taken possession of a piece of this common land for cultivation, its ownership is acknowledged and respected as long as the family actually cultivates it. What the Indian collects of the natural products of the country and what he produces or acquires through his own work — such as clothes, ornaments, weapons and implements, magical instruments, etc. — is also regarded as his exclusive property, although, as soon as food is in question, an unwritten moral law and social sympathy largely induces the individual owner to share it with others. The flocks of course also belong to individual families. The sheep and goats always wear property marks, so that when they are taken home from the pasture in the afternoon the Indians can easily determine who is the owner of each animal.

The lower Chaco tribes, particularly the Choroti and the Ashluslay, do not know of any distinctions between rich and poor, and even among the Tobas it is a comparatively rare thing that a man possesses more than his fellows. Only a few great chiefs who have made successful wars against

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Choroti SK6

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithll*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklandk*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
548 self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
182 self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

201 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
534 and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
304 requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence intimate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
583 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
836 girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of
[581] sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit
[582] the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

table, or a guinea pig, which are excellent tidbits, though the lack of salt makes culinary success doubtful for one who has been used to it from the very baptismal font.

The Indians like a white person to be free and easy with them and to appreciate their things. So it was that I, when I was in their camps, after having gained their confidence, would go about here and there tasting their food, and they would be beside themselves with laughter while I repeated "hiss," "hiss," which means "good," "good." Of course one must eat with the fork which nature has supplied, with the exception of soup which is drunk with the shell of a clam which is very abundant in the surrounding lakes. Where I did almost jeopardize my reputation was once when I had to drink from a vile gourd with a really filthy lip. But I closed my eyes and a few moments later opened them covered with glory, and triumphant.

On that occasion, upon taking our leave, the Indians indicated that they wished to see us fire our rifles and we, to please them, fired two or three times into the air. It was something to hear the yelling of those women, and to see the tumult of boys struggling to pick up the shells. How similar is man in all stages of civilization and age.

I was forgetting to say that the width of the huts is hardly ever greater than the length of a bed.

Chapter IV

The Indian Women

Let us now for a while take up the matter of the Indian women. The Mataco women are generally rather short, but this does not keep them from being, on occasion, quite charming and well formed while they are young [179]. While living among them it is not unusual to see them naked, but in the presence of strangers they never lack a more or less protective fig leaf. On board our ship we had, for a good many days, a man and his wife. The latter wore a pair of shorts such as those we wear when we go bathing, and as she was young and well built and good looking, I can give assurance that the situation was of somewhat questionable benefit to some of our argonauts, forced anchorites as they were.

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Choroti SK6

are due — at least in part — to geographical causes. As to the Choroti, it is to be noticed that among them the women in general have great social importance, to such an extent in fact, that we may speak of a real gynaecocracy. This is in the first place due to the numerical disproportion between the sexes which, at least at present, exists in this tribe. The causes of this phenomenon are difficult to assign; there is for instance, no general custom of killing new-born female children which would account for it. Infanticide is indeed practised in the case of monstrous children and twins, but it has reference to male children as well as to female. Female children are appreciated perhaps more than male children, for the very reason that women are so few in the Choroti society. Whatever the real cause of the numerical paucity of the women, it is this fact which explains their social influence. Besides this, we have to take into consideration the strict division of labour between the sexes existing among the Indians. For instance, sowing and planting, the carrying of fuel, the gathering of wild fruits, the brewing of intoxicating drinks, and a good deal of other home industries are wholly or chiefly incumbent on the women. This to the Indians means that no man *can* successfully do work which custom prescribes shall be done by a woman. A consequence of this is that particular importance is ascribed to female work as such and that women in general are held in great esteem. From this point of view we must also explain the custom that a man who marries must go and live with his wife's family. It is mainly due to the reluctance of her parents to separate from her on account of the work she performs. Among the Choroti no compensation is given for a bride, because no bargaining of any kind whatever takes place between the members of the tribes. Instead of that, custom prescribes that the young husband shall render services to her parents, which is only possible if he stays with the family of his spouse for a longer or shorter time. In this way matrilocal marriage in the Choroti and other Chaco tribes seems to me to have originated, although the Choroti at any rate are not now aware of these services being really obligatory and a form of compensation for the wife. Marriage among them appears now as a wholly private affair based upon the voluntary agreement of both parties. But where a matrilocal marriage has developed, the children are naturally looked upon as belonging in the first place to the mother and to her tribe or clan, whereas the husband's importance as a family father is only secondary.

The same kind of »mother-right» and gynaecocracy also prevails, or prevailed formerly, among the *Mataco* Indians who, for instance, allow

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M
562 the girl to take the first step towards contracting marriage, just as is the
584 case with the Choroti. Similarly the *Tobas* trace descent through the
T female, but social conditions in the Toba society are more highly dif-
611 ferentiated and the influence of the women is limited accordingly. The
562 social position of the Indian woman and the characteristic liberty given her by custom appears in matters of love and marriage, a topic dealt with in the following chapter.

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Choroti SK 6

C 581 584 or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

C 581 593 Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelīte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeẅlitse símă*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C 585 Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 636 584 Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M 585 789 535 When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

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Chapter V.

Position of the women. Division of labour.

The influential position of the women among the Chaco Indians has already been touched upon. The facts mentioned as to the »mother-right» prevailing among these Indians, the right of the Choroti and Mataco women to propose marriage, etc. give us to understand that the social position of the Chaco woman is by no means that of an oppressed slave, as it has sometimes been described by superficial observers. Even the Tobas, in spite of comparatively frequent divorce, hold their women in high esteem, as may indeed be inferred from one of their myths about the origin of the women. It is therefore impossible to subscribe to the opinion expressed by Campos with special reference to the Tobas when he says that »the women, as has been stated by all, are the yoke-carriers of the house; they are the slaves and not the comrades of the men». Only a passing traveller, who has not had an opportunity to study the social conditions of the natives properly, can arrive at such an opinion. It is true that matrimonial relations are not as ideal among the Tobas as among the Choroti, where women have the right to choose husbands and wholly dominate the family life. Among the Tobas it may happen — as would never happen among the Choroti — that a husband beats his wife, either because he is bad himself or because she has proved unfaithful and tried his patience too much by her jealousy; but such cases are rather exceptions than the rule; generally the Toba husband treats his wife with kindness and affection.

The division of labour between the sexes prevailing in the Chaco as in other parts of South America, easily gives a superficial observer the impression that the women are treated by the men as inferior and subjugated beings. The home industries, especially spinning, weaving, and pottery-making, are wholly in the hands of the women. They not only have to do

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

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462 the general domestic work, but in particular to collect and carry home wild roots and fruit from the forest as well as fire-wood and water. Thus every afternoon one can see the women returning home laden with heavy burdens of fuel or of algaroba or other fruits, carried in large net-bags. The hardest workers in all tribes are the older women. At any rate I noticed that the younger married Toba women shunned the heaviest work, for instance the carrying of fuel, leaving this to the older women of the family. As to agriculture, both sexes take part in it, but the men do the rough work, felling the trees and clearing the ground. The domestic animals, that is to say, the goats, sheep and fowls, are left to the care of the women. The men, in addition to the rough work they perform in agriculture, reckon fishing and hunting as their main occupations. the Toba men being also frequently occupied in warfare, which is a real T
[825] profession among these Indians. The armadillo, which is regarded by the Tobas as a »female» animal, is the only game caught by the women.

This division of labour is very strictly observed. It is not an accidental institution, nor due to the desire of the men to oppress the weaker members of society and to compel them to do such kinds of work as they do not, for one reason or another, like themselves. It is, as it were, founded upon the nature of things and in some cases connected with the animistic ideas of the natives. A man would be ashamed to do work which according to custom is incumbent on the women, and similarly a woman would seem ridiculous did she perform a man's work. A European who notices for instance a Choroti family when about to move, and sees the wife laden with an enormous burden of things belonging to the family, and perhaps a sucking child in addition, whereas her husband goes free and disengaged, only carriyng his bow and arrows, might easily arrive at the conclusion that the Choroti husband treats his wife like a slave; but the conclusion would nevertheless be wrong. The husband must have his hands free among other things to be able to defend the family with his weapons against venomous snakes or other dangers threatening it on the way, or to hunt. The women themselves look upon this state of things as being perfectly natural.

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462 The industry which is characteristic of the Indian woman in the
562 Chaco as elsewhere in South America is thus by no means an expression of her inferior social position. The work she does is not compulsory but voluntary and must be wholly explained by the conditions of life which have developed among the Indians. Mr. Grubb, who during his long stay among the Chaco Indians acquired a perfect knowledge of their

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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psychology, is quite right when he points out that in reality the men do their fair share of the work, although it is not seen to such advantage as that of the women. Thus fishing and hunting which are the chief occupations of the men are by no means a pastime or recreation, but a serious, onerous, and often dangerous undertaking; and the same of course, in a still higher degree, holds true of warfare.

As to the Toba woman, her independent and influential position appears in its way from the right she possesses to decide about the future husband of her daughter; as we have seen, the mother's consent is particularly required. The women also show their influence when raids against other tribes are planned, exciting the passions and revengefulness of the men. And in all tribes the women serve as permanent and self-elected arbitrators. When quarrels arise at the drinking-feasts, which is not unfrequently the case, and threaten to develop into sanguinary fights, it is the women that allay the agitated feelings and separate the fighters, thus preventing more serious calamities.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112

first place, of course, of the chiefs. The children are adopted as members of the tribe, and they readily amalgamate with it, the more so as the captives are generally well treated and admitted to equal privileges with their conquerors.

All Indian tribes of the Pilcomayo were formerly scalp-hunters and head-hunters, and some of them still practise this custom. The head of the slain enemy was cut off, the scalp stripped from the scull, and both were kept as a sort of trophy. Shortly before I arrived at the Pilcomayo in 1911, the *Ashluslay* had succeeded in killing nineteen Bolivian soldiers who were marching down to one of the military settlements on the river. The heads of the young men had been cut off and taken home by the Indians. Later on it was reported that their scalps or skulls, fixed on long poles, decorated the entrance of the main Indian village, being used at the great feasts as drinking-cups which were believed to inspire the drinkers with courage. For my own part I have not been able to gather more particulars about these head-hunting practices of the Chaco Indians, nor has any other traveller given information on this point. On the war customs observed by the Argentine Mataco-Vejos, the Italian traveller Pelleschi makes the following statement: »Whosoever kills an enemy wears as a trophy, if he has time to secure it, the scalp with the hair, the ears, and possibly a fold of skin from the back of the neck. He forms it to the shape of a cup by means of a bulrush or a flexible twig, which he binds and stitches all round the edge; then, while still bloody, he fills it with liquor, and holding it by the hair, passes it round to his companions, who empty it as they drink in honour of the victor and in scorn of the vanquished. Another way is to hold the scalp by the edge and pour out the liquor in drops over the hair and jaws.» [1])

As to the *Tobas*, I have gathered that when they return home after a successful attack a great feast is held, when the spoils taken on the war expedition are brought forth in triumph, dances are performed, and algaroba beer is drunk to excess. Dancing forms an important part of the feast. The victory dance of the Tobas is *Nomi* which is performed by the younger warriors during the day. A special dance is performed round the scalps, hung on high poles in the middle of the village, and beer is drunk from the skulls, but I have no more details about these ceremonies. Nordenskiöld, who during his travels in the Chaco came across a scalp taken by the *Mataco* in one of their wars, mentions in passing that

[1]) Pelleschi, *Eight Months on the Gran Chaco*, p. 80.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

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»before the Indians parted with their trophy they demanded that their old women should be allowed to sing and dance with it». It is a pity that Nordenskiöld, dominated by his exclusive interest to obtain a rare Indian »curiosity», did not avail himself of the excellent opportunity to inquire as to the ideas which the Indians connected with this scalp-dance of the women. We must look for an explanation from other sources. In the account I have given of the war customs of the Jibaros I have shown that they are wholly founded on magical ideas. The hair and head of the slain enemy is regarded as the seat of his soul or spirit and therefore is full of mysterious power. In fact, through the dances and other ceremonies performed with the scalp or head, the trophy is turned into a fetish which will promote the luck of the victor in various respects. The fact that the women play the most important rôle at the scalp-feasts — which seems to be almost a general rule — is also due to special magical ideas. The most important of the beneficial effects ascribed to the trophy is that it promotes fertility and renders the domestic animals prolific. Since, according to the belief of uncivilized peoples, woman is, as it were, the symbol of fertility, not only in the human world, but also in the animal world and in nature, it is reasonable to assume that women perform the scalp-dance precisely to promote fertility by means of the lucky object. Such is the case for instance among the Jibaros, where the dance of »supplication» round the trophy is professedly resorted to with a view to making the harvest abundant and the domestic animals prolific. Evidently the Chaco Indians entertain similar ideas. Since the head or the scalp is full of spiritual power we can also easily understand that the Indians believe themselves to be »inspired with courage» by drinking from the trophy.

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Special honour is paid among the Tobas to chiefs who have carried a war to a successful end. The ordinary chiefs receive confirmation in their dignity by the Council of the Old Men, and the young temporary leader, elected for that particular war expedition, is made an ordinary chief in recognition of his merits.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti 586

C 262

spirits, but not for old men who are initiated in the magic art and know how to render them harmless. — It is curious that on the other hand an animal like the *deer* is regarded by the Choroti as absolutely unfit for food. Not even old men would touch the flesh of deer, believing that if they did, they would die. This is due to the belief, mentioned before, that the deer is an evil spirit (*môhsek*), the reincarnation of the spirit of a sorcerer, a superstition which is widespread among the South American Indians and everywhere manifests itself in an aversion to eating the meat of this innocent animal.

M 785

Ceremonial fasting, as we have seen, is prescribed among the Choroti and the Mataco on certain occasions which are regarded as important and critical in some respect. Thus the father has to restrict his diet when he is lying in couvade, and girls have to diet during their first menstruation. We have also seen that behind these practices there is the fear of evil spirits in one form or another.

If disease and death bringing demons are believed to enter easily into the body with the food eaten, we can understand why eating is so often to the Indians a ceremonial business. This is also intelligible from the point of view that by eating an animal and coming in contact with its soul, a man may acquire the spiritual qualities of that animal. This idea explains the curious custom practised among the Tobas, that when a chief's daughter attains puberty, the men alone have to eat the meat of the ostrich, whereas the women eat the meat of the armadillo. As a general rule, both among the Tobas and among other Chaco Indians, men and women do not eat together but separately, the men first and the women afterwards. This custom is observed so strictly, that one may assume a particular superstition behind it. Moreover, when the Indians eat, they do not speak much with one another and do not like to be spoken to. Since they believe that man may evade evil spirits by keeping silence and avoiding attracting their attention, it is possible that the ceremonial character of their banquets is partly connected with this idea. And as women are especially believed to attract the spirits, this may be, or may originally have been, one reason why the men avoid eating with them. But it should also be remembered that in primitive societes eating together is believed to establish a mysterious union or connection between all those taking part in the common banquet. Since a strict distinction is made between a man's and a woman's spiritual qualities, it is not difficult to understand that the men avoid the company of the women on those occasions when they eat. However

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba S112
Choroti SK6

C 765 forming a falling scale in a minor key, which makes a very peculiar impression. At the time of mourning the women and children commence this wailing at fairly regular intervals and all at once, as if it were agreed upon. To one who lives for some time in a Choroti village it is evident C 765 that wailing forms part of Indian etiquette. Not only must the mourners, when they arrive from another village, which has been abandoned on 576 account of a death, be received by a choir of weeping women and children; any guest who arrives in a village shortly after a death has taken place there is received in the same way. When in March 1912 I visited the Choroti in the interior of their land, where no European had yet penetrated, I noticed with astonishment that on my arrival at a village I was received with loud wailing by the women and children. I soon learnt that a great chief had died some time ago; but the fact that the wailing was renewed to receive me remained unexplained. I was told, however, that this peculiar way of receiving strangers was prescribed by Choroti custom. The most probable explanation seems to me that it is feared lest the spirit of the defunct should revisit his people in a strange disguise, and that the wailing has for its object to propitiate him or to frighten him away. Such ideas prevail among other South American tribes also, both in the Chaco and elsewhere.

M C T 765 302 562 There are certain other customs observed in connection with mourning, but they are as a rule limited to the women. Among all Pilcomayo tribes it is customary that when a man dies, his widow, daughters, and sisters cut their hair short with the sharp teeth of the *palometa* fish and burn it. Ceremonial wailing always attends the cutting of the hair. When I asked the Choroti why a widow cuts and destroys her hair after the death of her husband, I was told that the dead husband, who wants his wife to follow him to the grave, is believed to attack her through the hair. In order to rid herself of this danger she shaves it off. Exactly T 765 the same belief prevails among the Tobas: the dead husband or father will seize his surviving wife or daughter by the hair and cause her to fall ill and die. Among the Tobas a widow cuts her hair twice, first immediately after the husband's death, the second time some months later T [602] when the hair has again grown long. At the same time she repeats the wailing. Similarly the nearest female relatives have to diet, in so far as they are not allowed to eat fish for many months. If they infringe the rules of diet in regard to fish they may sicken and die. After a Toba woman has cut her hair the second time she may again eat fish, her mourning is over and she is allowed to marry again. Even some of the

756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[562] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing.

Magic

789 609 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsble for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

The opposite could well be demonstrated but in order not to stray from these my Indians, let me say that I have seen proof positive of conjugal love among polygamists.

We had on board an Indian with his young and beautiful partner, whom he loved and adored as though she were a representation of the Virgin.

In that business of the Indian who was bitten by a snake and whom we treated, his wife came to him immediately and cared for him for twenty days without ever leaving his side.

Chief Pascual, whose wife was captured and carried off in a surprise raid -- she being old and ugly --, organized an invasion, tracked down the attackers, fought like a lion and rescued his partner from the hands of the enemy. These are facts which happened in a short time while I was present in that area.

When an Indian puts in an appearance and asks for something, he never forgets his children, his wife or his relatives: when he receives anything capable of being divided up, he distributes it, not only to the above but also to his companions.

I have also noticed that mothers are always extraordinarily loving with their children; and have noted that the inter-tribal wars and the mass killings of the inhabitants of a given village are always motivated by the need to avenge offences offered against compatriots or relatives. And if this does not reflect loving concern, what does?

[218] They are cruel, but only regarding prisoners of war whom they condemn to death. We are hardly in a condition to judge them for this cruelty since we did ourselves do the very same until recently; put it into wholesale practice against the Indians themselves during the period of conquest, and continue to do so against them even now when we can do it with impunity.

Among the Indians this custom of killing prisoners is necessary for their personal security in the nomadic life they lead in which they are continually exposed to surprise attacks, and it furthermore frees them from the shame of slavery, an unknown phenomenon amongst them. (1) Looked at from another point

1. This does not agree with what is recounted about the Mbayas and other tribes, who, as report has it, have slaves. (Ed.)

because he was so tall, and the Matacos called Quiatzutaj, which means Vilelón (large Vilela Indian--Translator), because of his national origin and size, when I asked him how things were going with him replied: "Well...I,...I rich...I having...much... algarrobo pods...I rich." They are miserly with these pods and with aloja, to the extent that they will not barter them except on very rare occasions. Only in a niggardly way and half heartedly will they invite anyone to share their aloja.

One morning I came upon a group of some forty Indians who were sitting around a yuchan of aloja. When I made my appearance and as soon as they recognized me they all began to shout: "John, John...yúc-cu-ás...yúc-cu-ás" (tobacco, tobacco), and I answered "hué-ni-tdé: niquiolá pac" (I have none, later I shall give you some). Only then did they invite me to drink with them and at my first refusal did not insist a second time, the chief saying to me -- "No my child...no...we...taking...you giving...tobacco." This was by way of politeness, in the Indian manner to be sure, but politeness nonetheless. I, to please them, made some effort to speak a few words to them in their own language and finally took my leave saying: "Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet...nutpinlá pac...niquioc-la yuc-cu-as..." (Goodbye, I am going home...I shall come back right away...I shall give tobacco). And all of them, full of pleasure because I spoke to them in their language and promised them tobacco shouted: "Amecná... amecná...tapil...ccaelitt (Goodbye, goodbye, come back soon). I returned after two or three hours with my pockets bursting with cut tobacco [190] and found all of them still drinking. As soon as they saw me they reminded me of my promise, which I thought they might have forgotten amidst the fumes of drunkenness. I distributed it to them and even when it was all gone they kept on asking me for more, upon which I turned my pockets inside out and shouted to them "namhuen, namhuen" (I have no more). They, satisfied with the eloquence of my demonstration, gave up their clamoring saying hée hée, which means "well, well"; but they forgot to offer me another drink of aloja.

While on the subject of greetings: these Indians have the custom of tapping the chest of their guests lightly and amicably with their half-closed fist, accompanying these caresses with expressions of good fellowship such as hée, hée, etc. -- (Good, good! etc.).

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

upon as perfectly natural, and since full reciprocity exists, such an act of apparent liberality does not even evoke feelings of gratitude in those who for the moment are the objects of it. Those who have been travelling and therefore have not produced crops, or those who for some other reason have no means of subsistence for the time being, have a claim on the hospitality of their fellow-tribesmen. Even when there is nowhere a real want the successful hunter or fisher gladly shares his abundance of food with other families of the village, knowing that others will do the same to him on another occasion.

Native law enjoins hospitality not only to fellow-tribesmen but also to members of foreign tribes with which the Indians stand on a friendly footing. The same hospitality and liberality is shown to a white man whom the Indians regard as their friend. For my own part I frequently had, both among the Tobas and the Choroti, personal experience of this Indian hospitality.

In spite of the liberality which appears in the relations of the different members of the community to one another, private property is strictly respected in all the tribes. We can particularly speak of »socialism» in regard to the *land*, which, as I have mentioned before, is considered to belong to the people in general; no Indian, not even a chief, has a direct claim to any part of it above his fellows. The flocks of sheep and goats feed on the common pasture. Similarly the natural products of the country, such as game, fish, wild fruit, honey, and fire-wood, are common property. But as soon as an individual family has taken possession of a piece of this common land for cultivation, its ownership is acknowledged and respected as long as the family actually cultivates it. What the Indian collects of the natural products of the country and what he produces or acquires through his own work — such as clothes, ornaments, weapons and implements, magical instruments, etc. — is also regarded as his exclusive property, although, as soon as food is in question, an unwritten moral law and social sympathy largely induces the individual owner to share it with others. The flocks of course also belong to individual families. The sheep and goats always wear property marks, so that when they are taken home from the pasture in the afternoon the Indians can easily determine who is the owner of each animal.

The lower Chaco tribes, particularly the Choroti and the Ashluslay, do not know of any distinctions between rich and poor, and even among the Tobas it is a comparatively rare thing that a man possesses more than his fellows. Only a few great chiefs who have made successful wars against

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter X.

Visiting. Communication with other tribes. Trade.

648 Within the different sub-tribes there is frequent visiting between the families, and similarly there is frequent communication between those sub-tribes which live on a friendly footing with one another. The Choroti likewise have intercourse with certain foreign tribes, especially with the Ashluslay on the lower Pilcomayo and the Tapiete and the Avas on the northern course of the river. With the Mataco on the other hand, the Choroti have at times had strained relations, and the warlike Tobas they fear, avoiding as far as possible having anything to do with them. The friendly intercourse and trade between certain Chaco tribes, who perhaps live at great distances from one another, is of considerable ethnological interest.

574 Among all Indians, visiting is always a more or less ceremonial matter, but in the Chaco these ceremonies are comparatively simple. In their everyday life, when meeting out on the plain or in the forest, the Indians do not use any particular words of salutation. On the other hand, when an [576] Indian pays a visit to another house, and especially when he visits the house of a neighbouring tribe, he, on entering, only pronounces a word equivalent to »I come», »I arrive»; in the Choroti and Mataco language this is *kanám*, in the Toba language *nóvyi*. The host only answers with a word which means, »it is good» (in the Choroti language *eis*, in the Mataco and Ashluslay language *is*, in the Toba *nóin* or *nōtta*). The guest can now take a seat at the door but keeps silence until he is spoken to. This is the rule in all cases where the guest is known and regarded as a friend. If algaroba beer and food is offered to him, this is a particular sign of friendship, and the guest may thereafter speak and move about freely as if he were at home. On the other hand, when the visitor is not welcome but regarded with hatred and suspicion the Indians turn the back and

[p. 98]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

M 574

remain silent, perhaps muttering some menacing words. This is particularly the way in which the Tobas receive undesired guests. The best thing for a visitor so received is to leave the Indians as soon as possible, since these treacherous and daring savages would not shrink from taking his life.

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When the Choroti guest leaves the house where he has paid a visit he always says: *yápeh*, or: *ayápeh*, »I go», or »I go back (to my own house)», to which the host only answers: *mah*, »go on!», »hurry on!». The Toba guest, on leaving, says *malhék*, or *kiuo* or *málhe'giuo*, (»I go», »I go back to my house»), the host answering with the word *hamóh* (»hurry on!»).

C 439

The *Choroti* barter with those foreign tribes with whom they maintain friendly intercourse, their own most important article of exchange being dried fish. From the Guarani-speaking Tapiete Indians, and in some cases from the Avas, they receive especially the much appreciated cereal, maize, as well as the red *urucú*-paint, indispensable for painting the face and the body on festival occasions. The *urucú*-shrub, it should be noted, requires a purely tropical climate and does not grow in the Chaco. On the other hand the Choroti barter with the Ashluslay in the south, receiving from them among other things one of their most costly ornaments, a necklace consisting of small buttons cut out from snail's shells and strung closely together. Such a necklace is from three to six yards in length, and is highly valued not only as a pure ornament but also on account of the magical properties ascribed to it. The receiving of these necklaces from the Ashluslay seems to be but a transit-trade, for the latter Indians in their turn buy them from the tribes in the interior of the Chaco, probably from the Lenguas, who according to Mr. Grubb, make such necklaces. Mr. Grubb adds that »these strings of buttons are the money of the people» and that the value of a big necklace is one sheep.[1] As a matter of fact, the Choroti when bartering with the Ashluslay pay one sheep each for these necklaces.

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Of more interest are the commercial connections which the *Tobas* have with neighbouring tribes, especially with the Mataco-Nocténes in the west and the Avas in the north. At any rate there is frequent intercourse between the Bolivian Tobas and the Avas living at the Catholic missions Tarairi, Tihüipa, and Machareti. In connection with the visits which these Indians are in the habit of paying to the country of the Tobas, I had an excellent opportunity of studying primitive Indian trade. The

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[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

because he was so tall, and the Matacos called Quiatzutaj, which means Vilelón (large Vilela Indian--Translator), because of his national origin and size, when I asked him how things were going with him replied: "Well...I...I rich...I having...much... algarrobo pods...I rich." They are miserly with these pods and with aloja, to the extent that they will not barter them except on very rare occasions. Only in a niggardly way and half heartedly will they invite anyone to share their aloja. 824 [556]

One morning I came upon a group of some forty Indians who were sitting around a yuchan of aloja. When I made my appearance and as soon as they recognized me they all began to shout: "John, John...yúc-cu-ás...yúc-cu-ás" (tobacco, tobacco), and I answered "hué-ni-tdé: niquiolá pac" (I have none, later I shall give you some). Only then did they invite me to drink with them and at my first refusal did not insist a second time, the chief saying to me -- "No my child...no...we...taking...you giving...tobacco." This was by way of politeness, in the Indian manner to be sure, but politeness nonetheless. I, to please them, made some effort to speak a few words to them in their own language and finally took my leave saying: "Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet...nutpinlá pac...niquioc-la yuc-cu-as..." (Goodbye, I am going home...I shall come back right away...I shall give tobacco). And all of them, full of pleasure because I spoke to them in their language and promised them tobacco shouted: "Amecná... amecná...tapil...ccaelitt (Goodbye, goodbye, come back soon). I returned after two or three hours with my pockets bursting with cut tobacco [190] and found all of them still drinking. As soon as they saw me they reminded me of my promise, which I thought they might have forgotten amidst the fumes of drunkenness. I distributed it to them and even when it was all gone they kept on asking me for more, upon which I turned my pockets inside out and shouted to them "namhuen, namhuen" (I have no more). They, satisfied with the eloquence of my demonstration, gave up their clamoring saying hée hée, which means "well, well"; but they forgot to offer me another drink of aloja. 123 574

While on the subject of greetings: these Indians have the custom of tapping the chest of their guests lightly and amicably with their half-closed fist, accompanying these caresses with expressions of good fellowship such as hée, hée, etc. -- (Good, good! etc.). 576 ●

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Chapter X.

Visiting. Communication with other tribes. Trade.

648 Within the different sub-tribes there is frequent visiting between the families, and similarly there is frequent communication between those sub-tribes which live on a friendly footing with one another. The Choroti likewise have intercourse with certain foreign tribes, especially with the Ashluslay on the lower Pilcomayo and the Tapiete and the Avas on the northern course of the river. With the Mataco on the other hand, the Choroti have at times had strained relations, and the warlike Tobas they fear, avoiding as far as possible having anything to do with them. The friendly intercourse and trade between certain Chaco tribes, who perhaps live at great distances from one another, is of considerable ethnological interest.

574 Among all Indians, visiting is always a more or less ceremonial matter, but in the Chaco these ceremonies are comparatively simple. In their everyday life, when meeting out on the plain or in the forest, the Indians do not use any particular words of salutation. On the other hand, when an Indian pays a visit to another house, and especially when he visits the [576] house of a neighbouring tribe, he, on entering, only pronounces a word equivalent to »I come», »I arrive»; in the Choroti and Mataco language this is *kanám*, in the Toba language *nóvyi*. The host only answers with a word which means, »it is good» (in the Choroti language *eis*, in the Mataco and Ashluslay language *is*, in the Toba *nóin* or *nõtta*). The guest can now take a seat at the door but keeps silence until he is spoken to. This is the rule in all cases where the guest is known and regarded as a friend. If algaroba beer and food is offered to him, this is a particular sign of friendship, and the guest may thereafter speak and move about freely as if he were at home. On the other hand, when the visitor is not welcome but regarded with hatred and suspicion the Indians turn the back and

[p. 98]

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Choroti SK6

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

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to the extent that the Indian comes under the influence of the whites and gets »civilized», to that extent also he loses the virtue of honesty, as he loses many other virtues characteristic of him while he is in a state of nature. This again is chiefly due to the bad example given by the whites themselves. The latter steal from one another, infringe the proprietary rights of the Indians and commit other wrongs against them. The Indians, who are on this point comparable with children, naturally think they may do the same, and their very sense of justice seems to require that the same measure as is meted to them by the whites, they may themselves measure to the latter again.

M. 273 578 627

The only occasion when crimes may be committed among the Choroti are during the great drinking-feasts. When the Indians are intoxicated with algaroba beer they easily begin to quarrel with one another, and these quarrels in extreme cases may end in homicide. Now the Indians certainly regard a homicide committed in a state of inebriation rather as an accident than as a crime, for the algaroba beer is sacred and an Indian inebriated by it is looked upon as possessed by a spirit and not in the ordinary sense responsible for his acts. But the Indians are anxious to prevent such accidents and this is above all the task of the women, who never themselves drink any intoxicating drinks. On two occasions I witnessed quarrels arising during the drinking-feasts. In one case an Indian, when excessively drunk, got mad and seized his bow and arrow to shoot another Indian on account of some old controversy. Immediately the women took hold of him, deprived him of his weapons, and compelled him to leave the scene of the feast and the whole village. He in fact left for an other village in the vicinity and remained absent for several days, when he was allowed to return to his home. The minds of the two adversaries were then perfectly tranquillized and there was no more grudge between them. In the other case also the women intervened and seized the weapons from the quarrelling men to prevent fights and manslaughter. It is usual in such cases that the offending party is sent away from the village or »exiled» for some time.

T 674

Among the more advanced *Tobas* thefts occasionally take place, but there is a question whether this phenomenon is not due to the influence of the whites, since the Tobas have on the whole been more in contact with civilization than the Choroti. In the case of smaller thefts there is no public punishment among the Tobas; the affair is left to the private concern of the person robbed and the thief. In more serious cases the Council

T 685

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582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wilyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. [584] Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

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586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognized is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

[587] [589] Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. [682] Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

During the aloja revels squabbles, fights and killings are frequent, and this not only among the Indians but among the Chaco whites also. 578 ●

A couple of words now about the yuchan, also called palo borracho (drunken tree--Translator). It is a bombaceous tree whose scientific name is Chorisia insignis, and might well be called the cotton tree. It has a strange shape which justifies its vernacular name. The trunk is shaped like an oil jar, that is, narrow at its base, wide in the middle and narrow once more at the point where the crown forks. The trunk grows to a diameter of two meters and is covered with spiked bumps. At most it reaches a height of four or five meters and is often accompanied by a shoot growing at its base. The crown is at first made up of only two branches which later subdivide and form a wide crown of some eight, ten or more meters in diameter. The leaves are similar to those of the walnut but a little smaller and provide good shade. 137

From the bark, strips are cut which are used for tying bundles, as roofing material, to wrap and tie bunches of tobacco leaves and for any similar use. The Indians make their canoes from the trunk, all of a piece. In order to do this all they do is hollow it out with any old tool, since the wood is soft and easily worked when newly cut but later becomes harder than cork although spongy like it when dry. The Matacos use the name cuóu quiác for canoe, which in their tongue means "duck." 824 283 396

But the thing which is especially interesting about the yuchan is its fruit, which in size and shape is like a lemon. When it is ripe, which usually occurs between November and January, according to its location, the lemons split into four lobes and there appears a plume-like puff of cotton, white as snow, which little by little is carried away by the wind. 137

One of these open lemons is about the size of a fist, and each tree produces hundreds of them each year.

The Indians make a limited use of this cotton, but the whites do not, although I have seen in Catamarca, where the number of these trees is small, white cloth made from this material which won prizes at the Córdoba exhibition.

In the Chaco there is an immense number of yuchans which grow mixed in with other hard-wood trees. If this cotton could be

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[519] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
[831] must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

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family will then be sent to the killer's village to ask whether the murdered woman's husband was at home the night before. If the answer is negative the murderer is known, and the families of the two victims will take up their arms and prepare to attack the killer's village. However, this was often merely a move undertaken to ensure the payment of blood money, compensation for the two lives, by the murderer's family. 628 682

Another example of the fatal results of a woman's infidelity is bound up in a custom that clearly shows the cruelty that formerly prevailed among the Mataco. If a man discovered that his wife had a lover, he could pretend ignorance and privately watch their habits and meeting place. One day he would follow his wife and wait in hiding until he could surprise the pair asleep. First he would kill his rival with an arrow, and then overpower the wife and cut her throat. He then dragged her out on to the path with legs far apart, slit up her stomach and lay her lover on top. The husband then crept back to his hut, seating himself at the fire with his bow and arrow in his hand waiting to see what would happen. Someone would soon come by the scene of the crime and come running back to the village, whereupon the man fled into the forest. As he could not be found a start was made with burying the two victims. In the meantime the murderer had crept close in and could hear what the wife's family said about him. At the moment they lowered the wife's corpse into the grave, and all eyes were looking down, the man shot one more arrow, killing the brother of the murdered woman. He then fled at great speed, reached his village and informed his family of the slaughter of the three persons. Both his father's and his mother's bands then armed themselves, and shortly afterwards the bands connected with the wife and the rival arrived to attack the village. This case is not merely a story, but a typical instance showing how adultery with the Mataco frequently leads to homicide and blood feuds between different bands. 152 628 682

Unfaithfulness is one of the chief reasons for divorce, which is a quite frequent occurrence with the Mataco. If on account of infidelity a man is divorced from his wife, he himself leaves the house taking with him only his personal effects such as fishing net, tinder, bow and arrow etc. He moves first to his parents' house, and later to the family of his new wife. Under these circumstances he cannot take his children with him unless they are so big that they themselves desire it. If the woman's unfaithfulness is the cause of the divorce, she will be evicted from the house, and not until later will her family come and fetch her personal property such as clay vessels, *yicat*, harvest of forest fruit, plus any goats and sheep. The children then stay with the father and can be brought up by his mother or some other female relative. It is always a general rule that at divorces the injured party retains house and children, and only the personal property is divided. However, it is not always that things go according to rule. Often, for example, an injured woman and her mother will visit her divorced husband's new house when he is away, remove his personal things and perhaps burn down the house. 586 [183] [578]

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159 naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it
762 and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch
[766] the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered.
[136] According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

[578] *Third case.* A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was dis-
[797] covered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual
[881] frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered
[586] girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His
[578] first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who
[797] warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

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forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

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been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

/319/

Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 177 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171] M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
247 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
323 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

302 "Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own
291 teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
296 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
415 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
[276] bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

262 "Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

273 "From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
● 579 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

533 "When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting; 221 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of 262 [227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness 231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from 241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they ● 579 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

"To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
222 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
535 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other ani-
789 mal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithli*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklandi*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
[534] and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence
583 intimate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
836 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit
[582] the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 178 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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584

[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two

[622] bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The

[611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together
[591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily,
844 as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the
585 advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are
847 considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final
[581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *asuttha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say,
[182] but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

NILS FOCK
University of Copenhagen,
July 1961.

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
●582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

585 "The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

595 "Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
596 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

843 "When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

854 "The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children. While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

647 "Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

● 582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

T 591 also belong to the mother's tribe or clan. Although the Tobas have thus the maternal system of descent, this mother-right, as already pointed out, does not amount to real matriarchy or mother-rule, as among the Choroti.

C 582 As to restrictions in contracting marriage, there seems to exist among most tribes a native law prohibiting unions between very near blood-relations. Among the Choroti, and probably the Ashluslay and Mataco, first cousins are not allowed to marry. The Choroti only gave me the explanation that cousins are alike brother and sister; marriages between them would be looked upon with the same horror as if a brother and a sister married each other. Of the Tobas I was told that they have no objection T 582 to cousins marrying each other. Still, considering the similarity of the social customs and institutions of the Chaco tribes, I doubt whether the same restriction as to cousin-marriage which exists among the lower tribes has not formerly existed among the Tobas also. — Since the families belonging to the same village community are generally closely related to each other, marriages do not as a rule take place between persons of the M 582 621 same village. On the other hand, marriages are generally, although not exclusively, contracted between persons belonging to different village communities of the same sub-tribe. The outer circle within which marriage is allowed is very wide. The Chaco Indians have no objections to marrying women of foreign tribes, and wars are often waged for the very purpose of stealing young women who are afterwards married by the victors.

C M T 586 Divorce occurs in all Chaco tribes, although more frequently among the Tobas than among the primitive Choroti and Mataco. A Toba, Mataco, or Choroti man may leave his wife merely for the sake of marrying a younger and prettier one, since conjugal fidelity is not a prominent virtue of married men in the Chaco. Still, such cases are rather exceptional in Choroti society. The very fewness of the women and the difficulty of getting a new wife instead of the one divorced naturally makes divorce difficult as far as it depends on the man. In all the tribes, on the other hand, a woman may leave her husband if he proves unfaithful, if he treats her badly, or if he is lazy and unable to support her. Of the Toba women particularly I noticed that they left their husbands for very trifling reasons. Unfaithfulness on the part of married women seemed to me to be a common thing among the Tobas, but this may in part be a consequence of the unfavourable influence which the contact with civilization has exerted upon the social morality of these Indians. As for the husband, adultery

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The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter. T 262

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *Mataco* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aittáh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men. M 881 554 622

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*. M 881 535

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat. M 841

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *Mataco* and the *Chorotí* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause M 304 M [582]

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Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *alejo* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *asutaka;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

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832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithli*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklanik*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
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Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *caraguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

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581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [579] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during 797 the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

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It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *enutiha tahnayóy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

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of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

NILS FOCK
University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLo̱t*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hapʔap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

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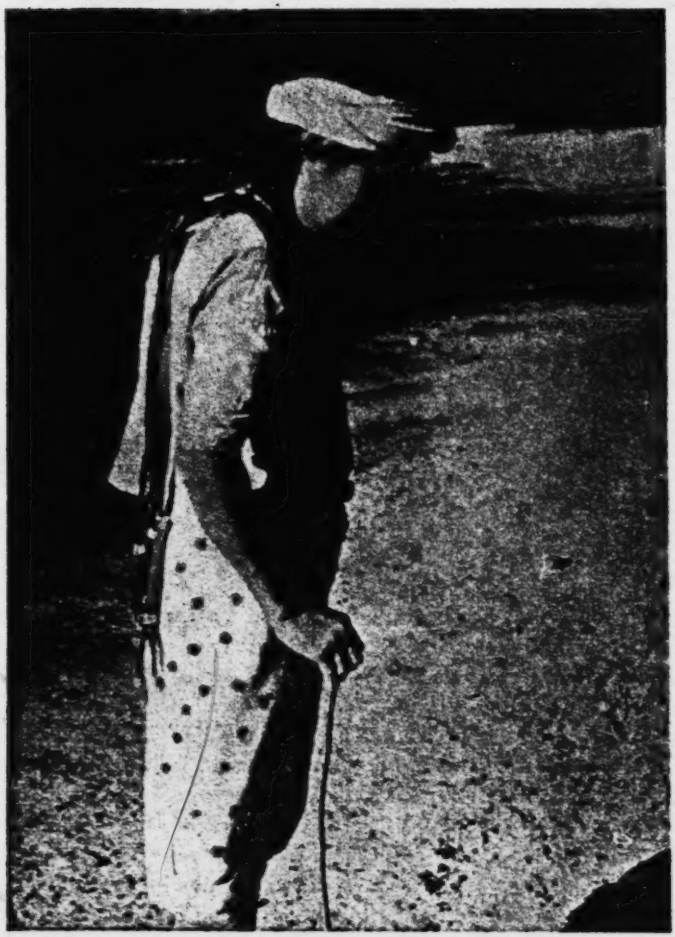

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583 581 847 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 591 [178] [342] Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 [881] [867] [606] Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his [606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will [476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 609 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 [554] The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilocality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension [182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

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University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

In places such as these in which women lose their attractions at M 595
an early age and in which men are decimated by the constant wars, the
custom of polygamy is a social necessity for the tribe which would
otherwise run out of members, and a physical necessity for the men M 837
and for many women who would otherwise stay single. Nevertheless there
are not lacking loose women, free in their favors, for whom the Indians
use the name of amoeccue.

The man is jealous and cruel to his wife if he suspects her of infidelity. While we were visiting the camp of Peilô we had the opportunity of hearing a husband, deep within one of the huts, beat and threaten his wife with death because she had been careless and fallen into the hands of a soldier. Nu-a-ilon-lâ (I shall kill you) he ground out between his teeth. On another occasion a woman, after her husband had been absent for two years, took up with another man; the husband returned, lay in wait, ran after and caught his wife and slit her belly open with a knife before the whites could prevent it. This woman did not die and as soon as she was well returned to live with her would-be murderer.

When the Indians intend to get married they dye their cheeks M 584 ●
and the region around the eyes red. The man will give his love a [302]
present at the time he makes his proposal and if the woman gives [184]
an affirmative answer the man gives her a dowry of whatever he has,
such as sheep, chickens, skins, etc.

If the families approve of the union the couple goes to live near one of them, should they not approve then the pair leave the hut and often even leave the camp. Once consent is granted, the nuptial ceremony is the act of consummation.

Among the Chiriguanos, when a man wants to ask for a girl's C 584
hand he places a bundle of firewood and a small deer or other provision
at her door; if on the following morning the woman lights the fire and
prepares a meal with the food supplied, the proposal is considered accepted and the suitor repairs to the table. Some people hold that this is also a Mataco custom, but the facts which I have been able to glean about the matter do not confirm this.

The Chiriguano chiefs, however, have a privilege, which is that C 584
they cannot be rejected by the women of their choice: this is a great 622
stroke of luck for them. The chief reveals his inclination with the offering of a piece of meat or some other thing; the girl cooks it, and they then share both meal and bed. The chiefs, especially the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

are due — at least in part — to geographical causes. As to the Choroti, it is to be noticed that among them the women in general have great social importance, to such an extent in fact, that we may speak of a real gynaecocracy. This is in the first place due to the numerical disproportion between the sexes which, at least at present, exists in this tribe. The causes of this phenomenon are difficult to assign; there is for instance, no general custom of killing new-born female children which would account for it. Infanticide is indeed practised in the case of monstrous children and twins, but it has reference to male children as well as to female. Female children are appreciated perhaps more than male children, for the very reason that women are so few in the Choroti society. Whatever the real cause of the numerical paucity of the women, it is this fact which explains their social influence. Besides this, we have to take into consideration the strict division of labour between the sexes existing among the Indians. For instance, sowing and planting, the carrying of fuel, the gathering of wild fruits, the brewing of intoxicating drinks, and a good deal of other home industries are wholly or chiefly incumbent on the women. This to the Indians means that no man *can* successfully do work which custom prescribes shall be done by a woman. A consequence of this is that particular importance is ascribed to female work as such and that women in general are held in great esteem. From this point of view we must also explain the custom that a man who marries must go and live with his wife's family. It is mainly due to the reluctance of her parents to separate from her on account of the work she performs. Among the Choroti no compensation is given for a bride, because no bargaining of any kind whatever takes place between the members of the tribes. Instead of that, custom prescribes that the young husband shall render services to her parents, which is only possible if he stays with the family of his spouse for a longer or shorter time. In this way matrilocal marriage in the Choroti and other Chaco tribes seems to me to have originated, although the Choroti at any rate are not now aware of these services being really obligatory and a form of compensation for the wife. Marriage among them appears now as a wholly private affair based upon the voluntary agreement of both parties. But where a matrilocal marriage has developed, the children are naturally looked upon as belonging in the first place to the mother and to her tribe or clan, whereas the husband's importance as a family father is only secondary.

The same kind of »mother-right» and gynaecocracy also prevails, or prevailed formerly, among the *Mataco* Indians who, for instance, allow

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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the girl to take the first step towards contracting marriage, just as is the case with the Choroti. Similarly the *Tobas* trace descent through the female, but social conditions in the Toba society are more highly differentiated and the influence of the women is limited accordingly. The social position of the Indian woman and the characteristic liberty given her by custom appears in matters of love and marriage, a topic dealt with in the following chapter.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

C 581 584

or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

C 581 593

Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelite*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeñlitse símā*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C 585

Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 636 584

Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

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When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLoł*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hapʔap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated. 585 The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later 591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily 595 men have only one wife, some have two, but never more. [593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although 837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an [578] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks» [831] must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed [672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group [627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a [726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war, he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened 825 bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

595 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aleja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *enatska;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithlî*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samaklanêk*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
[534] and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence inti-
583 mate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
836 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit
[582] the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [541] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [579] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *nikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. [584] Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flashphot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matrilocal exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [847] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *enutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

585 "The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

595 "Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

843 "When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

854 "The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children. While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

647 "Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

At a wedding which is properly celebrated with all the attendant frills there are alcoholic beverages made from the pods of the algarrobo and vinal, and from forest honey -- regarding all of which I shall write in the following chapter. 273 [585]

Chapter VI

Fermented Beverages

Natural Products of Domestic Use

The algarrobo is to these parts what the chestnut tree is to Europe in its usefulness to the people who live in the region. By observation I have found that it grows in the area between one hundred and four hundred meters above sea level and between 30° and 15° of southern latitude, between the mountains and the sea. It does not like dampness, which keeps it from growing even in those places which would otherwise suit it. In dry, hot places I have come upon it even at an elevation of seven hundred meters above sea level, but always in flat country. 137

The algarrobo is found in various situations. Sometimes there are whole forests of this tree only; sometimes it grows in company with others. In my judgment it is the most widely distributed tree in the region and deserves, for this reason, and because of its great importance to have a whole area or forest zone named after it. It is to be found, in fact, growing both in forests rooted in earth built up out of the waters when these lands were raised, and in alluvial soil recently washed down.

The wood of the algarrobo is ideal for most construction purposes (except for roofing) and carpentry, but usually has the drawback of being short. There oozes from the trunk a black resin for which we have no use but the Indians do. The fruit is in the shape of a pod and contains a somewhat sweet flour which is used to make bread and fermented drinks. 137 824

There are in the region three types of algarrobo: the white kind which has pods in color and size similar to our white beans, from which a good beverage is made and the flour of which could be used. The black kind with pods like black eyed peas from which an inferior

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

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Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelīte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeńlitse símä*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

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Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 836 584

Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

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When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

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them. The aim of the dance is partly to protect the former against supernatural dangers, an idea generally associated with the Indian ring-dances. But in addition, it seems to have special reference to marriage, for it is supposed in some mysterious way to influence the marriage candidates favourably. On this particular point, however, I did not receive further information from the Indians.

Lastly, we have to consider the marriage customs of the *Tobas*. The Tobas are generally monogamous for the simple reason that it is difficult for an ordinary man to maintain several wives and a large family, but there are exceptions to this rule. Polygamy is, however, allowed by custom, and if a Toba considers himself rich enough and has an opportunity of getting wives, it is of no rare occurrence that he marries two, three, or more women, who generally live in different villages owing to the jealousy they entertain for each other. This kind of polygamy is especially found among the great chiefs. Thus the famous cacique Tayeclique has had in all ten wives. One has died, he has divorced five, and at the time of my stay among the Tobas he had four wives. Such great chiefs frequently separate themselves from their wives only for the sake of marrying some younger and prettier woman. The children of a divorced wife have not the same rights as the children of her supplanter, and if the eldest son is born of such a wife he cannot become chief on the death of his father; in this case the eldest son of the new wife will inherit the cheftainship. The father, however, does not break completely with the children of a divorced wife if they are adult, but maintains relations with them, and they sometimes visit their father.

Among the Tobas, as among most Chaco tribes, prenuptial chastity is almost unknown, great sexual liberty being allowed both boys and girls before marriage. As soon as a girl is marriageable, that is, has passed her first menstruation, she may choose casual lovers, and generally she does not fail to make use of her freedoom. Although in some parts of the country, the sexual liberty of the Toba girls seems to have degenerated into prostitution, there is no doubt that the social morality of the people has approved of this custom since ancient times. The young men and women meet at the dances, some of which, among the Tobas as among the Choroti, are intimately connected with the sexual life. The girls cannot, however, as among the Choroti, take the initiative in contracting marriage.

When a Toba man has found a girl whom he likes and wants for his

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[518] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
[831] must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caragualá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aleja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *anatsha;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [847] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *anutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

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583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
867 will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
554 cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

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University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

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433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
● 585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not
586 recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[634] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception. 462

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chäguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have. 595 422 556

Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families. 586

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T 591 also belong to the mother's tribe or clan. Although the Tobas have thus the maternal system of descent, this mother-right, as already pointed out, does not amount to real matriarchy or mother-rule, as among the Choroti.

C 582 As to restrictions in contracting marriage, there seems to exist among most tribes a native law prohibiting unions between very near blood-relations. Among the Choroti, and probably the Ashluslay and Mataco, first cousins are not allowed to marry. The Choroti only gave me the explanation that cousins are alike brother and sister; marriages between them would be looked upon with the same horror as if a brother and a sister married each other. Of the Tobas I was told that they have no objection T 582 to cousins marrying each other. Still, considering the similarity of the social customs and institutions of the Chaco tribes, I doubt whether the same restriction as to cousin-marriage which exists among the lower tribes has not formerly existed among the Tobas also. — Since the families belonging to the same village community are generally closely related to each M 582 other, marriages do not as a rule take place between persons of the 621 same village. On the other hand, marriages are generally, although not exclusively, contracted between persons belonging to different village communities of the same sub-tribe. The outer circle within which marriage is allowed is very wide. The Chaco Indians have no objections to marrying women of foreign tribes, and wars are often waged for the very purpose of stealing young women who are afterwards married by the victors.

C M T 586 Divorce occurs in all Chaco tribes, although more frequently among the Tobas than among the primitive Choroti and Mataco. A Toba, Mataco, or Choroti man may leave his wife merely for the sake of marrying a younger and prettier one, since conjugal fidelity is not a prominent virtue of married men in the Chaco. Still, such cases are rather exceptional in Choroti society. The very fewness of the women and the difficulty of getting a new wife instead of the one divorced naturally makes divorce difficult as far as it depends on the man. In all the tribes, on the other hand, a woman may leave her husband if he proves unfaithful, if he treats her badly, or if he is lazy and unable to support her. Of the Toba women particularly I noticed that they left their husbands for very trifling reasons. Unfaithfulness on the part of married women seemed to me to be a common thing among the Tobas, but this may in part be a consequence of the unfavourable influence which the contact with civilization has exerted upon the social morality of these Indians. As for the husband, adultery

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casually committed with another man rarely caused him to divorce his wife; divorce took place only when she continued to maintain illicit relations with other men. The fact that among the Tobas polygamy is sanctioned by custom seems to have a tendency to make matrimonial unions looser than among the monogamous Choroti. But in all tribes the rule is that marriage lasts for life.

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If the women in general seemed to be more faithful in marriage than the men, this was in part due to the fact that in the former jealousy was

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Young Toba woman. Bolivian Chaco.

a very prominent quality. After the Choroti girl has made her choice of a partner, she faithfully keeps to him and jealously watches his conduct towards other women. If she suspects him of being unfaithful, she will soon remind him of his duty towards his own wife. If she discovers him in illicit practices, for instance in another man's house, or taking part in the dances, she at once seizes him by the hair and drags him to his own home. This is in fact the way in which the Choroti women generally treat their unfaithful husbands, that is to say, by seizing them by the long hair and taking them home. I never noticed that a man treated in this somewhat rough way made any resistance. The submissive attitude of

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

585 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

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837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom [586] does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to [822] find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

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family will then be sent to the killer's village to ask whether the murdered woman's husband was at home the night before. If the answer is negative the murderer is known, and the families of the two victims will take up their arms and prepare to attack the killer's village. However, this was often merely a move undertaken to ensure the payment of blood money, compensation for the two lives, by the murderer's family.

Another example of the fatal results of a woman's infidelity is bound up in a custom that clearly shows the cruelty that formerly prevailed among the Mataco. If a man discovered that his wife had a lover, he could pretend ignorance and privately watch their habits and meeting place. One day he would follow his wife and wait in hiding until he could surprise the pair asleep. First he would kill his rival with an arrow, and then overpower the wife and cut her throat. He then dragged her out on to the path with legs far apart, slit up her stomach and lay her lover on top. The husband then crept back to his hut, seating himself at the fire with his bow and arrow in his hand waiting to see what would happen. Someone would soon come by the scene of the crime and come running back to the village, whereupon the man fled into the forest. As he could not be found a start was made with burying the two victims. In the meantime the murderer had crept close in and could hear what the wife's family said about him. At the moment they lowered the wife's corpse into the grave, and all eyes were looking down, the man shot one more arrow, killing the brother of the murdered woman. He then fled at great speed, reached his village and informed his family of the slaughter of the three persons. Both his father's and his mother's bands then armed themselves, and shortly afterwards the bands connected with the wife and the rival arrived to attack the village. This case is not merely a story, but a typical instance showing how adultery with the Mataco frequently leads to homicide and blood feuds between different bands.

Unfaithfulness is one of the chief reasons for divorce, which is a quite frequent occurrence with the Mataco. If on account of infidelity a man is divorced from his wife, he himself leaves the house taking with him only his personal effects such as fishing net, tinder, bow and arrow etc. He moves first to his parents' house, and later to the family of his new wife. Under these circumstances he cannot take his children with him unless they are so big that they themselves desire it. If the woman's unfaithfulness is the cause of the divorce, she will be evicted from the house, and not until later will her family come and fetch her personal property such as clay vessels, *yicas*, harvest of forest fruit, plus any goats and sheep. The children then stay with the father and can be brought up by his mother or some other female relative. It is always a general rule that at divorces the injured party retains house and children, and only the personal property is divided. However, it is not always that things go according to rule. Often, for example, an injured woman and her mother will visit her divorced husband's new house when he is away, remove his personal things and perhaps burn down the house.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognized is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

[587] [589] Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

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of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

NILS FOCK
University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered. According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

Third case. A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was discovered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

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forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

availl to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

Funeral Rites

763 If the eyes of a dying person become fixed in a stare, his soul cannot escape and his agony is prolonged. That is why the Matacos cover the faces of the dying with a piece of cloth and knot it about the throat. This cloth often contributes to accelerate the end by asphyxiating them. Their rush to bury the dead is so great that it sometimes results in the interment of persons who are still alive.

764 The widow, her head shaved, is isolated in a corner of the hut, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain, or else she is placed in a small annex attached to the hut.

[162] Immediately after the death of a young man who had committed suicide in the village of San Patricio, his mother crouched on the earth, placed the dead boy's head on her knees and began to grieve for him, saying repeatedly the word "yos," "yos" (my son, my son). The father beat a drum, day and night in accompaniment of a dirge in which the expression "yos," "yos," was much in evidence. A group of women, under the direction of the mother who was shaking a rattle [18] executed a dance which consisted of little jumpy steps near the place where the corpse had been placed before the burial.

587] A widower or a widow may marry again two or three months after their spouse's demise. The women excuse themselves by saying: "I had to eat, I need someone who will clothe me."

Burial up in a tree, as described by Enrique Palavecino, used at one time to be very common in the middle region of the Bemejo.

Belief in the Reality of Dreams

787 842 The missionary Barbrooke Grubb has given numerous examples of the belief of the Lengua Indians in the reality of dreams. I have myself collected a good many examples of this belief among the Tobas and Pilagas. Here is an anecdote which illustrates this attitude among the Matacos. A girl from the village of San Patricio woke up weeping one beautiful morning. When asked about the cause of her sorrow, she answered that she had dreamed that she had had sexual relations with a young man and was afraid of becoming pregnant... (Footnote: Sent from the Smithsonian Institute of Washington by the author, a corresponding member. Translated from the French by Dr. Fernando Márquez Miranda, also a member).

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

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182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp. C 622

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time. C M 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. M 595 [588] [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always! M 844

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them. C M 832

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even M 832

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 ● 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[634] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, 591 doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having 684 affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

very qualities which the Indians appreciate in their leaders. He was valiant, cunning, and eloquent, and, being a great warrior, had provided his people with firearms which made the Tobas superior in war to all other Chaco tribes and dangerous enemies even to the whites.

The Eakachi, as is customary in the Chaco, hold their assemblies under a shady algaroba tree, generally at the time of the new moon. Besides watching the conduct of their chiefs, they have to deliberate questions of war and peace and to appoint an extraordinary chief when an attack against an enemy is planned. In addition, they act as judges or arbitrators in quarrels and fights between the men.

A social feature characteristic of all Chaco tribes is the relative matriarchy or »mother-right» prevailing among them. Descent is traced through the female, the child being supposed to belong to the mother's, and not to the father's, tribe or clan. Closely connected with this idea is the custom prevailing among most matriarchal peoples, that when a man marries, he stays with his wife's family, becoming a member of her clan. All these features are found among the Pilcomayo tribes, but particularly among the *Choroti* where »mother-right» has developed into real mother-rule. Thus in those parts of the Choroti country where they are neighbours with other tribes and intermarriage takes place, it is the rule that if the woman is of the Choroti tribe the children become members of that tribe, whereas, if a Choroti man marries a woman of another tribe, he himself and the children become members of that tribe. This was particularly noticeable in regard to the Ashluslay in the South with whom the Choroti frequently intermarry. Thus the »great chief» of the Choroti living near the fort Guachalla, the old Atamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but his mother being a Choroti woman he had himself become a Choroti.

The »mother-right» of the Choroti is not carried to such an extreme that for instance the maternal uncle or some other relative on the mother's side is regarded as the guardian of the children. Among the Choroti both parents are the guardians of the child although, as in other matters, the mother has always more to say. Nor does it imply that parentage is wholly attributed to the mother. On the contrary, the custom of couvade, as it is observed by the Choroti, shows that this maternal people is well aware of the father's great rôle in the procreation of children. The »mother-right» of the Choroti and of other Chaco tribes is in fact only a secondary phenomenon, evidently dependent on the social conditions which have developed among the tribes in this country, and which in their turn

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

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XVI. Chiefs

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XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying, "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

575 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

582 583 836 the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl [415] has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will [482] leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [541] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [579] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *nikyi*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [847] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *anutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

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[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her
262 hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense--sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
● 593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

take pains to comb themselves, particularly the women. I remember an occasion when I wished very much to obtain a paddle, made of "palo-fierro"-[iron-wood--Translator] and having two blades, the blades ending in long, narrow points. It belonged to an Indian friend of mine who had quite a beautiful wife. I offered him a comb in exchange for the double paddle, but after having considered the matter for a while he refused to make the exchange. His wife seemed to me to be very sorry that the deal had not come off, and she must have made use of all her wiles for on the following day her husband spontaneously came [176] and proposed that we make the exchange. It may be that the reader would have thought better of my being a little more generous, but let it be remembered that if I had given my comb away I would not then have been able to obtain the paddle, which was of more interest to me than the Adamic Indian couple.

What I have said of the Matacos can also be said of the Tobas, with this addition, that the Tobas are taller than the former Indians and generally show a larger expanse of forehead -- I do not know if they are actually broader -- owing to their habit of tying their hair up with a band. This information is true also of the Mocovíes and Chulupíes, all of whom inhabit the Argentine Gran Chaco, to the north of which, in the Bolivian Chaco, live the Chiriguanos and Cirionoses.

Among all these Indians the skin color varies between that of new copper and mud, there being also, here and there, some with blackish markings or blemishes.

Chapter III

Some Ethnic Characteristics

It is customary to say that these Indians are extremely dirty, but I have some very serious doubts in that regard, for I have seen them, in the summer time, run into the river for pleasure's sake at certain fixed hours of the day in great numbers, both-men and women, each sex in its own determined place. This would appear to be a custom and not a mere whim. In addition to this they often go into the water to fish. It is true that they seem to be dirty, mostly because of their

The opposite could well be demonstrated but in order not to stray from these my Indians, let me say that I have seen proof positive of conjugal love among polygamists.

We had on board an Indian with his young and beautiful partner, whom he loved and adored as though she were a representation of the Virgin.

In that business of the Indian who was bitten by a snake and whom we treated, his wife came to him immediately and cared for him for twenty days without ever leaving his side.

Chief Pascual, whose wife was captured and carried off in a surprise raid -- she being old and ugly --, organized an invasion, tracked down the attackers, fought like a lion and rescued his partner from the hands of the enemy. These are facts which happened in a short time while I was present in that area.

When an Indian puts in an appearance and asks for something, he never forgets his children, his wife or his relatives: when he receives anything capable of being divided up, he distributes it, not only to the above but also to his companions.

I have also noticed that mothers are always extraordinarily loving with their children; and have noted that the inter-tribal wars and the mass killings of the inhabitants of a given village are always motivated by the need to avenge offences offered against compatriots or relatives. And if this does not reflect loving concern, what does?

[218] They are cruel, but only regarding prisoners of war whom they condemn to death. We are hardly in a condition to judge them for this cruelty since we did ourselves do the very same until recently; put it into wholesale practice against the Indians themselves during the period of conquest, and continue to do so against them even now when we can do it with impunity.

Among the Indians this custom of killing prisoners is necessary for their personal security in the nomadic life they lead in which they are continually exposed to surprise attacks, and it furthermore frees them from the shame of slavery, an unknown phenomenon amongst them. (1) Looked at from another point

1. This does not agree with what is recounted about the Mbayas and other tribes, who, as report has it, have slaves. (Ed.)

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[593] Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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[152]

in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
229 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

CM 175 462 [644] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the CM Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships [595] with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances CM towards a Spanish woman. . . .

CM 175 "Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes [644] terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they CM usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, [764] those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while CM memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among [771] them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- CM spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may 175 do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. 756 These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

CM 114 This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
585 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about. Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of
[684] the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's ● 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception. 462

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chăguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have. 595 422 556

Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families. 586

In places such as these in which women lose their attractions at an early age and in which men are decimated by the constant wars, the custom of polygamy is a social necessity for the tribe which would otherwise run out of members, and a physical necessity for the men and for many women who would otherwise stay single. Nevertheless there are not lacking loose women, free in their favors, for whom the Indians use the name of amoeccue.

The man is jealous and cruel to his wife if he suspects her of infidelity. While we were visiting the camp of Peilô we had the opportunity of hearing a husband, deep within one of the huts, beat and threaten his wife with death because she had been careless and fallen into the hands of a soldier. Nu-a-ilon-lá (I shall kill you) he ground out between his teeth. On another occasion a woman, after her husband had been absent for two years, took up with another man; the husband returned, lay in wait, ran after and caught his wife and slit her belly open with a knife before the whites could prevent it. This woman did not die and as soon as she was well returned to live with her would-be murderer.

When the Indians intend to get married they dye their cheeks and the region around the eyes red. The man will give his love a present at the time he makes his proposal and if the woman gives [184] an affirmative answer the man gives her a dowry of whatever he has, such as sheep, chickens, skins, etc.

If the families approve of the union the couple goes to live near one of them, should they not approve then the pair leave the hut and often even leave the camp. Once consent is granted, the nuptial ceremony is the act of consummation.

Among the Chiriguanos, when a man wants to ask for a girl's hand he places a bundle of firewood and a small deer or other provision at her door; if on the following morning the woman lights the fire and prepares a meal with the food supplied, the proposal is considered accepted and the suitor repairs to the table. Some people hold that this is also a Mataco custom, but the facts which I have been able to glean about the matter do not confirm this.

The Chiriguano chiefs, however, have a privilege, which is that they cannot be rejected by the women of their choice: this is a great stroke of luck for them. The chief reveals his inclination with the offering of a piece of meat or some other thing; the girl cooks it, and they then share both meal and bed. The chiefs, especially the

generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp. C 622

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time. C M 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. M 595 [588] [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always! M 844

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them. C M 832

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even M 832

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for
[519] there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
[831] rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks» must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
[627] by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

595 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[593]

Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

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The names used for human family relationships change with the sex of the person involved. Need this startle us who have "mother" and "father," yerno [son-in-law--Translator] and nuera [daughter-in-law--Translator] which might more practically have been yerno, yema. It is strange that all languages seem to run along the same lines, the American ones being no exception. What is more, these latter not only make a distinction between the sex of the relative who is referred to but also between that of the person speaking. For example: in Araucano the father refers to his son as fotún and to his daughter as ñahue, while the mother calls her son coñi huenthú, coñi being the general term for "child" in the mother's terminology. In Quichua the father calls his son churí and his daughter ususí, while the mother uses the term huahua.

In the Chinese language, according to my interpreter Ayao, whom I hired not long ago for two francs an hour, son is Tsaé, and daughter, Pnoé; father is Lu-tao; mother Loúmuú; brother, Ghoó-séí-loú; and sister, Ttaí-tzt-é.

In Mataco we have the following names: father, quía; mother, ccó; son, locsé or lotsé; daughter, lectzá; brother-in-law, quayenécque; sister-in-law, ticquié; brother, lecquiilá or cjculá; sister, cjinno; uncle, uitoc; aunt, uidóje; nephew, lec-jié-ios (probably a combination of son and brother); niece, cjíaió; father-in-law, quióti; mother-in-law catelá; cousin, huac-lá. I find that the terms for son-in-law and daughter-in-law are the same as those used for brother-in-law and sister-in-law, and the term for brother-in-law is also used for son-in-law, which leads me to believe that I made a mistake in my notes.

The various words used to designate the same degree of [243] relationship, according to whether it be male or female must be attributed, in my opinion, to the agglutinative system adopted in the beginning in order to determine it, but whose etymological genesis subsequent alterations have caused to become lost. The fact is clear that for a married couple a nephew, for example, must be, for one of them, the son of a sister or brother, and for the other of a brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

If we draw together into a lump the words which express these diverse relationships, we shall find that the same degree of

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family relationship, let us say, for example, a nephew, has four different names.

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An equally interesting form is that used for the demonstrative pronouns, which is similar to French usage for it is composed of the pronoun toj meaning "this one" (corresponding to the French ce) and certain particles of location such as licné for "that one over there"; letti or lani for "that one"; and others, among which are tzi for "this one." This tzi is equivalent to chi and to quii and is interesting because we come upon it again in the Araucanian language. These demonstrative pronouns also have an adjectival use, and when so employed, become separated, the toj part being prefixed to the noun and the licné, tzi etc. being suffixed, these latter can then not be declined, but the former (that is, toj) is declined. Now then, does not the same thing happen with French demonstratives? For instance with ceci and cela, which in the plural form are ceux-ci, ceux-la, and become separated when applied to some other term.

And do such similarities in form not reveal a great harmony in human intelligence, the same linguistic recourses being used to express a like order of ideas in spite of the distance which separates the different races?

The following derivation deserves special mention because it is revealing of a whole order of ideas: "No" is ka, "nothing" is kiá, "nobody" is kiái; the three words keep to the same root, and in a way which is clearer and more logical than our corresponding words. Likewise we have tde meaning "no" and that meaning "nothing," these two terms used always at the end of a word or phrase.

Tell me now, what more elegant and more compactly logical does philology have to show than the manner in which the Matacos express possessing, containing, executing, or exercising a skill? The letter h (when it has an apostrophe it is to be pronounced nasally) shows up in many words, not to say all, which express possession or capacity. Now hi and huu express that which contains, he who possesses, and he who does something; huet means "house," "the place in which." For example: "fish" is yácsét, "fish pond" is yácsétte-hi; "shoes" are hissóhéss, "seller of shoes" is nissohésse-hi, "maker of shoes" is nissohésse-huu, and "shoe shop" is nissohésse-huet. And in all analogous cases they use the same

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and [586] chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints [822] of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

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583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

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out chunks of flesh, and can even [180] be of some slim service, similar to that which is told concerning that fellow in the "Ricciardetto." It is an ovoid, laterally flattened fish. The ray is round, vertically flattened and has three barbs on its tail. It can make a very painful and dangerous wound with the middle barb when the fish is stepped on and lashes out with its tail. Some grow to be over a meter in diameter. It lies on the bottom of quiet pools, as close as it can to the bank; it would seem to be viviparous. The yacaré, a kind of crocodile, will without warning bite the leg or arm of an unfortunate father, drag him to the bottom and there devour him.

So it is that bathing, which was so necessary to cool ourselves off in the suffocating heat, was always embittered by the presence of these maneaters.

The married woman is faithful to her husband by inclination, education and fear. There are tales of terrible revenges wreaked by husbands upon their unfaithful wives, over whom they have power of life and death. While they are single they can be and often are free in their ways. It cannot be doubted that the whites attract their interest, if matters of racial difference do not intervene, for the poorest white is always in a position to give better presents than is the richest chief.

These women love decorations and clothing, but have no use for skirts or corsets. They wrap themselves from the waist down in a blanket, and hold it up with a belt or cord which is hidden behind the fold of cloth. In addition to this they know how to distribute these rags in such a way as to accentuate their good figure and yet at the same time not encumber themselves, a skill not to be expected on first seeing them. Their dress consists of robes, and when they have any they put them all on, be it winter or summer, partly because of the nomadic existence they lead and partly because they like to do so. One might say that the saying: what wards off cold also wards off heat, is particularly applicable to them.

Both men and women love bright colors (particularly red) and variety, but they also like white cloth. When they put on any garment they always do so in such a way as to leave one arm free. The women have a high regard for the kind of shirts which we wear.

The women make their own ornaments out of leather and broken shells, achieving a certain elegance of form, though with a greater or lesser degree of rusticity. They wear, from childhood, a sort of

It is worth noting that although they are such tipplers, they do 264
not drink anything with their meals, not even water. On board ship
the Indian guests we entertained refused all beverages while they were
eating. After they had finished eating they preferred to drink water
by crouching beside the river and drinking out of one hand.

The Indians are great beggars and yet miserly with their own [209]
possessions where whites are concerned. This is understandable since
they are poor.

It occurs to me that I should mention something which, though 142
out of place here, I must set down for fear of forgetting it later: 145

The Indian boys, until they are eight or ten have disproportionately large bellies, so much so that they customarily bind them at the level of the navel. Later on they lose their bloated tummies and grow into well proportioned men.

It seems pertinent to me to say that the algarrobo belongs to 137
our family of the garrobas (Ceratonia silicua) and the botanists know
it under the name of Prosopis algarrobo. Its importance is immense
in the domestic economy of the savages and country people. It deserves close attention for this reason. The crown grows to some ten
meters in diameter but is not very dense, either because of the small
number of leaves or because of their shape, yet it affords quite a fair
amount of shade. The bark is very rough and is similar to that of the
grape vine.

The vinal (Prosopis ruscifolia) is a very small tree, yet boasts a sizeable crown. It is remarkable for its thorns which are from ten to fifteen centimeters long and sometimes a centimeter thick, and very dangerous if one gets a jab from them. The leaves, which are about the same size as acacia leaves but more pointed and somewhat rough, are said to be an effective remedy for eye ailments.

The scientific name for the chañar is Gurlioea decorticans; and of the mistol, Ziziphus mistol.

The fruit of all these trees are avidly devoured by all manner of beasts, and the algarrobo and vinal pods are the best possible fattening fodder for horses and cattle [191].

A type of fruit which is also to be found in a wild state, but in very limited quantity in my experience, is the plum. This fruit has a pleasant taste and is all the more appreciated for its scarcity.

In order to gather together in a common place, in addition to the tracks they leave they twist branches and handsful of grass at crossroads in order that their companions may know where to find them, they having prearranged the meaning of the signs. 487 201

[193] Another means of communication is by making fires. During our traveling about the Chaco we were continually surrounded by fires, either at close quarters or far away, fires which sometimes took on the proportions of colossal blazes. And often, when we thought that we were in absolute solitude, it would happen that upon approaching an Indian village we would be informed that we were expected, and we would hear tell of the order which had been observed in our march. Dur-202

They make use, moreover, of many spies and informers. In Mataco the former are called niguaiecque, and the latter gu'éicáss. 701 [203]

They apparently do have some sort of tactical organization: thus they have a general chief, subordinate chief and petty chieftains. The first is called, in Mataco, canniat tizán, the second, canniat, and as for the last, I have forgotten.

The general chiefs are chosen at second remove, that is, from among the subordinate chiefs, who, in turn, are elected by the people. Normally a marked preference is shown for the late chief's sons, provided they be of age, courageous and good. But then, of course, we must say that in these elections the same passions are present which appear amongst us in our elections.

They also have another category of persons, whom they call nyát and corresponds vaguely to the Spanish "caballero" or the "galantuomo" of southern Italy. So it is that they refer to any white persons whom they consider of quality with the name nyát. It is to be supposed that a like distinction is made among the other Indians. In Peru and wherever the Quechua language is spoken, gentlemen are called Viracocha. [554] [609]

Once the general chief has been elected the subordinate elector chiefs go to call on him when they can, which visits are celebrated with the accustomed drinking and eating orgies. A general chieftainship almost always embraces villages far removed from each other.

The Matacos call those who visit them tzicki-ác.

The authorities among the Chaco Indians play an almost purely military role. In peace time they lose practically all their prestige,

609 776 [55]

The Indians have great faith in the power of their a'hót. One of my Indian guides, Tajo ["slash" --Translator] by name (so called because he had a scar on his face) in order to prove to me the indubitable power of the a'hóts, and the crass ignorance of the whites who deny their existence, told me the following:

"It happened that a tribe was returning from a sugar plantation in the province of Salta. It was the season of algarrobo pods and one night all the people were celebrating, singing and dancing. Suddenly they became aware of the approach of a white man who was singing -- they could hear the noise made by the horse's hooves and by the large silver spurs.

"As soon as he arrived at the place where the people were gathered he halted and began to scold them for what they were doing, wishing to put a stop to their activity. The people did not like the white man's interference and said to the hayagüe ["witch doctor"--Translator] that he make him go away. The hayagüe, unable to bring this about by peaceful means said to the white who was insisting on stopping and profaning the celebration:

"'Now you will see if we are useless people and how strong is the a'hót.' He bent down, covered himself and shouted to the a'hót. 'Strike the white man down with an arrow and make him see if it is true that we are worthless people.' 'It is well,' answered the a'hót.

"Immediately a sound was heard coming up from beneath the ground, like the snapping of a stick. It was an arrow which had struck home. The white man suddenly slumped from off his horse. He was dead. The a'hót had shot the arrow into him because the white man had not wanted to believe in the a'hót."

771 776

The whole tribe swears to have witnessed the whole thing.

It is remarkable that the object, if not of worship then at least of recognition, be of an evil nature, for in the last analysis the a'hót is nothing [203] if not an evil power or one capable of evil. If we wish to consider such a recognition as the first glimmering of a religion, then we must confess that religion has as its base, fear of evil and the desire to command it.

Those pots which are used to contain water have an indented waistline around which a rope may be passed when they need to be transported. This rope, running around the jar, is slipped over the carrier's forehead and the vessel is carried on his back, to which effect he must bend back and neck forward. This manner of transportation is no where near as graceful as that of carrying jars on the head as our country women do, and rather makes the Indian women look like beasts of burden -- however, it may well be a more hygienic way and is, in any case, more practical when traveling along half choked forest paths. 482 [115]

They have no knowledge of, and do not practice, agriculture; yet they do sometimes plant corn (which, as is well known, originated in America) and also pumpkins. When they think it is time to go and eat the crop, they harvest it. They do not grind the corn, but boil it and the pumpkins also while they are yet green -- a harvest, then, is gathered in piece meal and lasts quite a long time. In order to sow they make use of a hard wood spade in the form of a small oar, or a large spear head; the husband makes a hole in the earth, his squaw throws in the seed, covers it, and that is all. The seed is sown in a recently burned off, damp field, that is, one which has just been rained on. 241 123

The crop is owned communally by all, but they are nigardly with it concerning outsiders. While we were on the ship, most of our food having run out, we hungered for fresh provisions and vegetables, for we had been without them for more than three months. When the Indians made us a present of pumpkins and ears of corn we were more than delighted. These Indians were friendly, but later on their friendliness proved false for they killed our interpreter. The sailors managed to discover the location of the pumpkin patch and corn field and raided them by stealth. On the following day, when they returned to the cultivated plots they found that everything had been destroyed and not a single growing plant was left. We were never able to find even one of the Indians. 609

It seems, also, that the whites do not want the Indians to take up agriculture. I was told that the white settlers once [215] came upon a number of fields sown by friendly frontier Indians, and destroyed them so completely that the discouraged Indians had never again planted so much as a handbreadth of land. This action 648 241

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And while on this subject of adjectives it is worth remarking that practically all those which express the opposite of some quality, usually of a good quality, are made up of the adjective denoting that quality plus a negative particle which either precedes or follows it. Thus, for example: "true" is matt, and "false," ka-matt or mattildé, that is to say "not true." "Good" and "pretty" or "nice" are hiss and tzî, while "ugly" is kat-zía and tzitdé; "far" is tocuery, "near," tocuei-tde, which can also be expressed by ca-tu-ta, in which catú means "elbow" and by analogy "curve," "around the corner," and so forth.

These negative particles are also used with nouns. For example: [253] "remedy" or "cure" is ckia, while poison is ka-ckía ("no remedy," "no cure"). Do we not find the same type of usage in our own languages when we say "uncertain" for "not certain" and "discourteous" for "not courteous"?

One might say, however, that these Indians lack certain refinements of which our language can boast and which tend to soften certain expressions, as for instance the subtle distinction between "false" and "not true," "far" and "not near."

[609]

Be that as it may, they still are not lacking in other distinctions, such as that existing between "stranger" and "foreigner." The former they call ajlu-taj-jlé-lé, which means "outsider," and the latter they call ic-quiomjlé-lé, that is, "he from below." And so he is, for from the Mataco point of view foreigners live "below," downriver and off past Paraguay. Upstream from them live the whites, whom they call Chihuéle.

Where did they get this word Chihuéle? Has it something to do with color? "White" is in their language pelaj, and "yellow," yaccatdé, that is, "not black," which proves that the opposite of black is for them yellow. Surely they do not consider us green or blue, however much their eyes may suffer from Daltonism. Can it be that they look upon us as red? This cannot be so either for red is icquiótt, which is a far cry from Chihuéle.

The actual fact is that Chihuéle means "good looking men."

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

476 upon as perfectly natural, and since full reciprocity exists, such an act of apparent liberality does not even evoke feelings of gratitude in those who for the moment are the objects of it. Those who have been travelling and 574 therefore have not produced crops, or those who for some other reason have no means of subsistence for the time being, have a claim on the hospitality of their fellow-tribesmen. Even when there is nowhere a real want the successful hunter or fisher gladly shares his abundance of food with other families of the village, knowing that others will do the same to him on another occasion.

574 Native law enjoins hospitality not only to fellow-tribesmen but also to members of foreign tribes with which the Indians stand on a friendly 609 footing. The same hospitality and liberality is shown to a white man whom the Indians regard as their friend. For my own part I frequently had, both among the Tobas and the Choroti, personal experience of this Indian hospitality.

421 In spite of the liberality which appears in the relations of the different members of the community to one another, private property is strictly respected in all the tribes. We can particularly speak of »socialism» in regard to the *land*, which, as I have mentioned before, is considered to belong to the people in general; no Indian, not even a chief, has a direct claim to any part of it above his fellows. The flocks of sheep and goats feed on the common pasture. Similarly the natural products of the country, such as game, fish, wild fruit, honey, and fire-wood, are common property. But as soon as an individual family has taken possession of a piece of this common land for cultivation, its ownership is acknowledged and respected as long as the family actually cultivates it. What the Indian collects of the natural products of the country and what he produces or acquires through his own work — such as clothes, ornaments, weapons and implements, magical instruments, etc. — is also regarded as his exclusive property, although, as soon as food is in question, an unwritten moral law and social sympathy largely induces the individual owner to share it with others. The flocks of course also belong to individual families. The sheep and goats always wear property marks, so that when they are taken home from the pasture in the afternoon the Indians can easily determine who is the owner of each animal.

556 The lower Chaco tribes, particularly the Choroti and the Ashluslay, do not know of any distinctions between rich and poor, and even among the Tobas it is a comparatively rare thing that a man possesses more than his fellows. Only a few great chiefs who have made successful wars against

756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[562] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing.

Magic

789 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neigh-
●609 bors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

very qualities which the Indians appreciate in their leaders. He was valiant, cunning, and eloquent, and, being a great warrior, had provided his people with firearms which made the Tobas superior in war to all other Chaco tribes and dangerous enemies even to the whites.

The Eakachi, as is customary in the Chaco, hold their assemblies under a shady algaroba tree, generally at the time of the new moon. Besides watching the conduct of their chiefs, they have to deliberate questions of war and peace and to appoint an extraordinary chief when an attack against an enemy is planned. In addition, they act as judges or arbitrators in quarrels and fights between the men.

A social feature characteristic of all Chaco tribes is the relative matriarchy or »mother-right» prevailing among them. Descent is traced through the female, the child being supposed to belong to the mother's, and not to the father's, tribe or clan. Closely connected with this idea is the custom prevailing among most matriarchal peoples, that when a man marries, he stays with his wife's family, becoming a member of her clan. All these features are found among the Pilcomayo tribes, but particularly among the *Choroti* where »mother-right» has developed into real mother-rule. Thus in those parts of the Choroti country where they are neighbours with other tribes and intermarriage takes place, it is the rule that if the woman is of the Choroti tribe the children become members of that tribe, whereas, if a Choroti man marries a woman of another tribe, he himself and the children become members of that tribe. This was particularly noticeable in regard to the Ashluslay in the South with whom the Choroti frequently intermarry. Thus the »great chief» of the Choroti living near the fort Guachalla, the old Atamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but his mother being a Choroti woman he had himself become a Choroti.

The »mother-right» of the Choroti is not carried to such an extreme that for instance the maternal uncle or some other relative on the mother's side is regarded as the guardian of the children. Among the Choroti both parents are the guardians of the child although, as in other matters, the mother has always more to say. Nor does it imply that parentage is wholly attributed to the mother. On the contrary, the custom of couvade, as it is observed by the Choroti, shows that this maternal people is well aware of the father's great rôle in the procreation of children. The »mother-right» of the Choroti and of other Chaco tribes is in fact only a secondary phenomenon, evidently dependent on the social conditions which have developed among the tribes in this country, and which in their turn

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two [622] bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together
[591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily,
844 as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the
585 advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are
847 considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final
589 test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *anutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

guaya moderna is essentially a compilation founded on the works of Campos, Cardús, and other writers [1]). The same holds true of the monograph of Father Ducci which, besides, only deals with one sub-tribe of the Tobas on the lower Pilcomayo. [2])

The ethnological studies of the Toba tribe contained in this book mainly refer, as appears from my previous statements, to the Bolivian Tobas, but also to the Toba Pilagá of Argentine. I met the latter at the sugar factories of Esperanza in June 1912, and moreover, some of my Indian informants in Bolivia were from Argentine or had lived among their kinsmen there. The general culture of the Pilagá, as already pointed out, is much the same as that of the Bolivian Tobas, although on the whole they seem to have preserved their old customs better than the latter.

The third tribe visited by me were the *Mataco*. Next to the Tobas, the Mataco form the largest of the Argentine Chaco tribes, but only a part of them may still be said to live in a state of nature. Three principal Mataco tribes can be distinguished. One of them inhabits the corner in northern Argentine roughly limited by Tartagal in the west and Rio Bermejo — an affluent of the Pilcomayo — in the south. These Mataco are called Vejós and are those most strongly influenced by civilization. The second tribe, known under the name of Mataco-Guisnay, lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo about ten leagues south of Fortín Guachalla. The third tribe, called Mataco-Nocténes — occupies the great triangle roughly formed by lines connecting the villages Yacuiba, Villa Montes, and Crevaux. Those Nocténes who live on the right bank of the Pilcomayo, between Villa Montes and Crevaux, have preserved their original culture best. Among these Indians I spent about one month in October and November 1912. They are culturally closely related to the Tobas living on the other side of the river, and intermarriage between the two tribes is frequent. Still the Nocténes speak their own language which, apart from certain dialectal differences, is the same as that spoken by the Vejós and the Guisnay. The Mataco language shows great affinity to the Choroti language which justifies us in referring both tribes to one and the same principal group. A third Chaco tribe of the same group are probably the Ashluslay, the language of which is unfortunately so far quite unknown to us.

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[1]) Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya moderna.* Asunción, 1900.

[2]) Fray Zacarias Ducci, *Los Tobas de Taccagalé con arte y vocabulario Toba-castellano.* Buenos Aires, 1904.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

SOCIAL LIFE

CHAPTER III.

Social organization. Chiefs.

The social organization among all tribes of the Pilcomayo is fundamentally the same, although the Tobas represent a more highly developed type of society than the Choroti, Mataco, and Ashluslay. Among all of them the »tribe» is a fairly loose social unit, being simply composed by families related to one another by blood. A clan organization in the strict sense of the word does not exist among the Chaco Indians [1]) and totemism is entirely unknown, although the beginnings of a totemistic system may be traced among the Tobas. The appellation »Ostrich-men» given to the Tobas by some of their neighbours, and certain ideas held of this bird by the Indians themselves undoubtedly point in this direction. As to the *Choroti*, I have already mentioned that they are split up into three principal sub-tribes, each occupying a special territory within the tract which these Indians regard as belonging exclusively to themselves. Although the different sub-tribes feel themselves, in a general way, parts of the same tribal unit, the Choroti people (*Jóhuaha*), there is not much communication between them and, as I have stated before, the relation between the Choroti of the Pilcomayo and the Choroti living in the interior is almost one of antagonism. Within the sub-tribes, again, the feeling of blood-relationship is strong. Such a sub-tribe consists of a number of village communities, each composed of a few families closely related to one another. As a rule each village has its chief, *anétsiäs*, and over the whole sub-tribe there is even a »great chief»,

[1]) When in the following pages I sometimes use the word »clan», this term has merely reference to the »sub-tribe», by which I simply mean a number of families recognizing consanguinity. The chief reason why the »sub-tribes» of the Chaco Indians cannot be called »clans» proper is that they are not exogamous.

[p.43] [p.42 is blank]

M 175 "Some 60 leagues from the mountains, the marshes of the Pilcomayo River, in the direction of the river Bermejo, are peopled by numerous Tonocotés and Lules who drew away from the territory of Tucumán at the time of the appearance of the first Spanish conquerors." (page 54).

"The nation which lives on the other side of this one (the Teuta) (1)

1. Possibly from "teuj-taj," meaning "big river," the Mataco name for the river Bermejo. --J. Pelleschi.

is the Mataguaye nation, which is the one closest to Jujuy." (page 76)

M 191 "Some are called Mataguayes Coronados and others Mataguayes Churumatas. The Coronados speak Guaraní, although this is not their mother tongue. The Mataguayes Churumatas understand and speak several tongues, such as Quichoa [sic], Guarany [sic] and Ocloya which they pick up from the captives which they hold as prisoners in their territory. They also understand the language of the Tobas. These M 175 Mataguayes were distributed in the following fifty towns: Neantiche, ● 621 Mocoy, Collemage, Auncapinhe, Hucohas, Hocohá, Oyaha, Natetehá, 109 Chinitiohé, Onin, Anuyguay, Alesnuy, Chayabo, Chioquiose, Hucoha, Chayquehé, Chachinamí, Pelo, Cahotochin, Nacalgoy, Chenesse, Halcacha, Cheneschá, Peque, Nitilinquin, Guays, Guocopa, Hucuchinami, Tiuquiahó, Hocalá, Leguelsehá, Oyaho, Carininquin, Yantis, Luguarache, Neglisehé, Loquelesse, Queyshé, Cotonhá, Tapela, Onoralgualache, Poytin, Hopitata, Hopitahé, Tatotehé, Lechonehá, Lohoteá, Tactoy, Apagatin, Rimpihá." (page 76)

194 Not one single time do we find the ending "gasta," although something similar to "a" and "aho" does appear. A negative proof must not be given undue importance, yet it ought not to be completely ignored [574].

IX

The Description of the Mataguayos etc. continues

C M 175 "All these nations which we have mentioned with their towns, that is: Taynuyes, Teutas, Mataguayes, Agoyas, Xolotas, Tobas, Mocobies, Yapitalaguas, and also Aguilotes who live among the

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

"There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any 622 621 authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

"They marry without any visible ceremony and without 582 formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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T 591 also belong to the mother's tribe or clan. Although the Tobas have thus the maternal system of descent, this »mother-right», as already pointed out, does not amount to real matriarchy or mother-rule, as among the Choroti.

C 582 As to restrictions in contracting marriage, there seems to exist among most tribes a native law prohibiting unions between very near blood-relations. Among the Choroti, and probably the Ashluslay and Mataco, first cousins are not allowed to marry. The Choroti only gave me the explanation that cousins are »like brother and sister»; marriages between them would be looked upon with the same horror as if a brother and a sister married each other. Of the Tobas I was told that they have no objection T 582 to cousins marrying each other. Still, considering the similarity of the social customs and institutions of the Chaco tribes, I doubt whether the same restriction as to cousin-marriage which exists among the lower tribes has not formerly existed among the Tobas also. — Since the families belonging to the same village community are generally closely related to each M 582 other, marriages do not as a rule take place between persons of the ●621 same village. On the other hand, marriages are generally, although not exclusively, contracted between persons belonging to different village communities of the same sub-tribe. The outer circle within which marriage is allowed is very wide. The Chaco Indians have no objections to marrying women of foreign tribes, and wars are often waged for the very purpose of stealing young women who are afterwards married by the victors.

C M T 586 Divorce occurs in all Chaco tribes, although more frequently among the Tobas than among the primitive Choroti and Mataco. A Toba, Mataco, or Choroti man may leave his wife merely for the sake of marrying a younger and prettier one, since conjugal fidelity is not a prominent virtue of married men in the Chaco. Still, such cases are rather exceptional in Choroti society. The very fewness of the women and the difficulty of getting a new wife instead of the one divorced naturally makes divorce difficult as far as it depends on the man. In all the tribes, on the other hand, a woman may leave her husband if he proves unfaithful, if he treats her badly, or if he is lazy and unable to support her. Of the Toba women particularly I noticed that they left their husbands for very trifling reasons. Unfaithfulness on the part of married women seemed to me to be a common thing among the Tobas, but this may in part be a consequence of the unfavourable influence which the contact with civilization has exerted upon the social morality of these Indians. As for the husband, adultery

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [541] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 178 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. [584] Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material
[415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

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622 621 authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

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776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

skin color, and also because of the scratches which become caked, and 515
because of the sun's burning which wrinkles the almost scorched skin, especially on their shoulders; and finally because they go about barefoot and naked in the mud, through the underbrush and bushes, and as they lie down on the bare earth it is only natural that they should be covered with dust, just as we, who wash a thousand times a day do a thousand times become dirty again. They are not -- pardon the expression -- grubby, and I firmly contend that they are not dirty by nature.

An Indian camp is composed of an undetermined number of 342 [361]
dwellings, made by sticking branches into the ground and tying them together on top in the form of a cupola. Onto this frame they throw quantities of straw until it looks like, not a hut, but a wagon so loaded with hay as to cover the very wheels.

They hurl the straw from quite some distance and yet so accurately as to cause wonder, so much the more as it is the women who do this work. A hut, once finished, is so strongly constructed that a man can stand and move about upon it, and it is quite waterproof.

[177] Each chief has his own group of huts, like so many barracks, and sometimes, especially on the occasion of a declaration of war, [622] ●
many chiefs gather.

The huts are usually so low-ceilinged that one cannot stand up inside, but they vary as to length according to the rank of the family and the number of families which live in them. The long huts are somewhat humped, with two or more doors. The entrance ways are usually protected, on the windy side of the hut, by a fixed windbreak -- one must stoop in order to be able to enter.

A hut is divided into the following parts: the kitchens and the sections where sleeping, sitting, working etc. is carried on; however, there is no material separation between these parts.

The kitchen is nothing more than a swept space on which a fire [354]
is lighted, but only when the weather is cold or when the family mother [765]
is in mourning, during which time she does not leave the hut for a year, or allow herself to be seen, nor does she speak except when strictly necessary. The usual thing is to cook food outside near the entrance. There are as many kitchens as there are families.

The bedroom consists of that portion of the hut where they 352
place skins and clothes, if they have any, upon which they lie and which they put on when they go out if it is cold. On the walls at the

although they retain their position of ministers of "foreign affairs," 701
representing the tribe before outsiders either to treat some matter,
or to form an alliance for either war or peace. And even then
their leadership is not of much value for the members of the tribe,
the populace, are free to refuse to go to war -- although actually
their pride only rarely allows them to hold back.

When a chief plans an attack he gets the advice of the old 721
men of the tribe and of other influential persons, and if these do
not set their approval upon his plan he nevertheless invites those
who will to follow him.

Sometimes, though, large scale invasions are planned by
the allied chiefs of several villages. When we arrived at the vil-
lage of Chaguaral, we found there a group of eleven or thirteen
chiefs, all Matacos, who were awaiting the arrival of [194] their
allies with whom, shortly thereafter, they invaded the territory
of other Matacos who three months earlier had given them a good
drubbing.

While they are on their way to wage war they vociferate 726
wildly, shouting both threateningly and happily. They dye part [302]
of their faces and bodies black and sometimes muss up their al-
ready unkempt hair until they look like "lost souls," in the opinion
of a Christian Indian. On the eve of battle, those who have the
wherewithal deck their hair, waist and ankles with feathers, pre-
ferring red or yellow ones, and tie any rag they may have with
them tightly about their midriffs. When combat begins they
break out with the most bloodcurdling yells.

This business of putting on warpaint is common to almost 000
all savages: it was the custom also among those whom the Romans
called barbarians; for example, according to Claudius the
Sigambrians used to dye their hair a brilliant red before going into
battle.

The chiefs have the place of honour in the thickest of the 726
battle, which always results in the death of some of them. If the 622
invaders win, they sack everything, capture the women, the 727
children and cattle, parcel out the booty and set fire to the vil-
lage.

They give no quarter to the warriors and only rarely do they 727
spare the lives of the older women because they distrust them as

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

anétsiās vuh, exerting a certain social influence. Chieftainship however, among the Choroti is rather nominal than real; even the »great chief» is in fact destitute of power, although in relation to other tribes and to the whites he exercises certain representative functions. Thus when commissions from the sugar factories arrived in the Chaco to negotiate about the sending of Indian labourers to northern Argentine, they had to deal with the chiefs, who through the medium of interpreters gave them answers on behalf of their people. But even the »great chiefs» cannot compel anybody to work, nor can they interfere with the private affairs of the families, in which the father and the mother have full liberty of action. Still more imaginary is the power of the village chief, who is nothing but a *pater familias* enjoying a certain esteem. He cannot command anybody, but merely represents his village community in relation to outsiders, just as the »great chief» represents the whole sub-tribe.

The dignity of chief is not hereditary among the Choroti, nor apparently among the Mataco. When the chief dies, the oldest family fathers of the community assemble under the big algaroba tree which serves as a club-house and elect a new chief, the election taking place in connection with a drinking-feast.

Old men are generally held in great esteem, and the chiefs are generally, although not invariably, men of advanced age. Among the Choroti, old men are held in particular esteem for superstitious reasons, since they are believed to be changed, after death, into evil spirits. As we shall see later on in the chapter on the religion of the Indians, the spirits of the Choroti are believed to appear in the shape of old men. Since the natural magical power of the human body is increased with advancing age, it is natural that old people are feared, but the supernatural halo which surrounds them of course at the same time is apt to give them social influence. Above all their supposed connection with the spirits makes them qualified to exercise religious functions. Independent of any particular initiation, every old man is credited with the power of conjuring the spirits and is thus always more or less a sorcerer. If therefore we wish to speak of a social distinction among the Choroti, we may say that the sorcerers, called *ayïeu*, are the only members of the Choroti society who in a certain sense form a class of their own or mark the beginnings of a social differentiation. Since, however, every old man is more or less expert in the act of magic and considered able to handle the rattle gourd (*pelïte*) or the drum (*wsyúk*), the *ayïeu* of the Choroti cannot be called professional sorcerers in the strict sense of the word.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

M 846

»to be a little sick», which means that he has to be cautious with regard to his work and his diet, just like his wife. Any heavy work, hunting, fishing, the touching of iron instruments, is prohibited to the father, since otherwise his delicate son might fall ill and die. Fasting is likewise obligatory for both of them. The Mataco say of both parents: *uenhitātāk, yil vuh*, *i.e.*, »they do not eat, there are many demons of death» (moving about and threatening especially the child, but also the parents themselves). A light vegetable food, mainly consisting of boiled and mashed maize, is prescribed for both of them.

When the confined woman has been delivered, her ventral parts must be well covered to protect her against evil spirits which might do her harm. In the evening drums are beaten to keep off the same supernatural, malicious powers. If the woman is the wife of a great chief, a special dance is performed which the Mataco call *Katináh* and which takes place at great feasts celebrated by the whole village community. Like all other dances of the Mataco, the *Katináh* is in its character ceremonial or a sort of conjuration by which evil spirits are kept off or made harmless.

M [622 535]

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Among the *Tobas*, just as in part among the Mataco, the ceremonies which are performed and the precautions taken are more elaborate when the mother is the wife of a great chief. Even some time before birth takes place the woman, as we have already seen, has to observe certain rules in regard to her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish. As soon as the woman has been delivered her body must be well covered, for otherwise, I was told, the evil spirits may enter into her and kill both her and her new-born babe. The danger is particularly great at night. Therefore the Indians assemble in great numbers outside the chief's house, chanting the whole night, accompanying themselves with their rattle-gourds and drinking great quantities of algaroba beer. In the day the young men perform the dance *Nomí*. During the first days the woman does not leave the house, and although she is not ill she remains completely inactive. She likewise continues to fast, eating neither fish nor meat and living solely on maize and certain leaves. — The above ceremonies are performed, and the rules of diet are observed, during five days, or until the navel-wound of the child is completely healed.

T 846

Much the same ceremonies are performed when the mother is a woman of ordinary rank, with the exception that the father of the new-born child alone chants to his rattle the first evening after the birth; and the dance *Nomí* does not take place. The happy event is always celebrated by an algaroba drinking-bout. The mother does not stay in bed and

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter.

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aitláh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men.

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*.

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat.

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *M a t a c o* and the *C h o r o t i* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[578] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
[831] rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks» must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
[627] by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

The Functions of the Chief

627 The ex-chief of the San Andrés region, on the Pilcomayo river, was the famous Cuchitoro, who received three leagues of land along the river from the government of Argentina. The present day chief of this region is called Santiago, and he was made chief by the white colonizers who hoped to win him to their service. Nevertheless, Santiago remained loyal to his people.

The principal functions of the chief, according to their [648] description to me at San Andrés, consist nowadays in representing his tribe before the whites and in patching up, amicably, any conflicts 622 arising between groups of Indians in his territory. If a murder is com- 627 mitted in one group it is the chief's duty to require the killer's family 682 to pay the blood price. The amount of such compensation depends upon the social status of the victim. If it is a matter of an old and inactive man the loss is considered of little importance and a couple of goats and an old rifle are sufficient to re-establish friendly relations between the victim's and the murderer's groups. In other cases the injured party demands a horse, three goats, a rifle, etc. If the blood price is put too high the chief in charge of the matter may seek out the head of the dead man's family and ask him to lower the price. [14]

682 In former times the law of an eye for an eye was meticulously carried out. The Indians of San Andrés had killed a man from a neighboring village whose inhabitants then emigrated to the Bermejo river. Fifteen years later a nephew of the dead man made the entire trip from the Bermejo to the Pilcomayo to square matters with the murderers and killed, in his turn, one of the Indians of the village. He then returned to the Bermejo without being pursued.

726 The last Indian war took place in the San Andrés region in 1928. The people of the village of San Martin attacked San Andrés, under cover of darkness. Firing continued until daylight, but--as often happens in these battles--no one was killed or wounded. Some time later the people of Yuto joined with the inhabitants of San Andrés to attack the San Martin Indians. They passed by the Mission composed and dressed for war, painted and adorned with feathers. Before the attack they executed a war dance in the bed of the Pilcomayo river,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [847] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *anutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[593] Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 262 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
● [626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsble for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba S/12

M 177 577

to the extent that the Indian comes under the influence of the whites and gets »civilized», to that extent also he loses the virtue of honesty, as he loses many other virtues characteristic of him while he is in a state of nature. This again is chiefly due to the bad example given by the whites themselves. The latter steal from one another, infringe the proprietary rights of the Indians and commit other wrongs against them. The Indians, who are on this point comparable with children, naturally think they may do the same, and their very sense of justice seems to require that the same measure as is meted to them by the whites, they may themselves measure to the latter again.

M 273 578 627

The only occasion when crimes may be committed among the Choroti are during the great drinking-feasts. When the Indians are intoxicated with algaroba beer they easily begin to quarrel with one another, and these quarrels in extreme cases may end in homicide. Now the Indians certainly regard a homicide committed in a state of inebriation rather as an accident than as a crime, for the algaroba beer is sacred and an Indian inebriated by it is looked upon as possessed by a spirit and not in the ordinary sense responsible for his acts. But the Indians are anxious to prevent such accidents and this is above all the task of the women, who never themselves drink any intoxicating drinks. On two occasions I witnessed quarrels arising during the drinking-feasts. In one case an Indian, when excessively drunk, got mad and seized his bow and arrow to shoot another Indian on account of some old controversy. Immediately the women took hold of him, deprived him of his weapons, and compelled him to leave the scene of the feast and the whole village. He in fact left for an other village in the vicinity and remained absent for several days, when he was allowed to return to his home. The minds of the two adversaries were then perfectly tranquillized and there was no more grudge between them. In the other case also the women intervened and seized the weapons from the quarrelling men to prevent fights and manslaughter. It is usual in such cases that the offending party is sent away from the village or »exiled» for some time.

T 674

Among the more advanced *Tobas* thefts occasionally take place, but there is a question whether this phenomenon is not due to the influence of the whites, since the Tobas have on the whole been more in contact with civilization than the Choroti. In the case of smaller thefts there is no public punishment among the Tobas; the affair is left to the private concern of the person robbed and the thief. In more serious cases the Council

T 685

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many
women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when
her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover
that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for
there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[578] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
[831] must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere
without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the
members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques*
are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened
bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to
make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party
did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

The Functions of the Chief

622 The ex-chief of the San Andrés region, on the Pilcomayo river, was the famous Cuchitoro, who received three leagues of land along the river from the government of Argentina. The present day chief of this region is called Santiago, and he was made chief by the white colonizers who hoped to win him to their service. Nevertheless, Santiago remained loyal to his people.

The principal functions of the chief, according to their [648] description to me at San Andrés, consist nowadays in representing his tribe before the whites and in patching up, amicably, any conflicts 622 arising between groups of Indians in his territory. If a murder is com- ●627 mitted in one group it is the chief's duty to require the killer's family 682 to pay the blood price. The amount of such compensation depends upon the social status of the victim. If it is a matter of an old and inactive man the loss is considered of little importance and a couple of goats and an old rifle are sufficient to re-establish friendly relations between the victim's and the murderer's groups. In other cases the injured party demands a horse, three goats, a rifle, etc. If the blood price is put too high the chief in charge of the matter may seek out the head of the dead man's family and ask him to lower the price. [14]

682 In former times the law of an eye for an eye was meticulously carried out. The Indians of San Andrés had killed a man from a neighboring village whose inhabitants then emigrated to the Bermejo river. Fifteen years later a nephew of the dead man made the entire trip from the Bemejo to the Pilcomayo to square matters with the murderers and killed, in his turn, one of the Indians of the village. He then returned to the Bermejo without being pursued.

726 The last Indian war took place in the San Andrés region in 1928. The people of the village of San Martin attacked San Andrés, under cover of darkness. Firing continued until daylight, but--as often happens in these battles--no one was killed or wounded. Some time later the people of Yuto joined with the inhabitants of San Andrés to attack the San Martin Indians. They passed by the Mission composed and dressed for war, painted and adorned with feathers. Before the attack they executed a war dance in the bed of the Pilcomayo river,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom [586] does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints [822] of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

family will then be sent to the killer's village to ask whether the murdered woman's husband was at home the night before. If the answer is negative the murderer is known, and the families of the two victims will take up their arms and prepare to attack the killer's village. However, this was often merely a move undertaken to ensure the payment of blood money, compensation for the two lives, by the murderer's family.

Another example of the fatal results of a woman's infidelity is bound up in a custom that clearly shows the cruelty that formerly prevailed among the Mataco. If a man discovered that his wife had a lover, he could pretend ignorance and privately watch their habits and meeting place. One day he would follow his wife and wait in hiding until he could surprise the pair asleep. First he would kill his rival with an arrow, and then overpower the wife and cut her throat. He then dragged her out on to the path with legs far apart, slit up her stomach and lay her lover on top. The husband then crept back to his hut, seating himself at the fire with his bow and arrow in his hand waiting to see what would happen. Someone would soon come by the scene of the crime and come running back to the village, whereupon the man fled into the forest. As he could not be found a start was made with burying the two victims. In the meantime the murderer had crept close in and could hear what the wife's family said about him. At the moment they lowered the wife's corpse into the grave, and all eyes were looking down, the man shot one more arrow, killing the brother of the murdered woman. He then fled at great speed, reached his village and informed his family of the slaughter of the three persons. Both his father's and his mother's bands then armed themselves, and shortly afterwards the bands connected with the wife and the rival arrived to attack the village. This case is not merely a story, but a typical instance showing how adultery with the Mataco frequently leads to homicide and blood feuds between different bands.

Unfaithfulness is one of the chief reasons for divorce, which is a quite frequent occurrence with the Mataco. If on account of infidelity a man is divorced from his wife, he himself leaves the house taking with him only his personal effects such as fishing net, tinder, bow and arrow etc. He moves first to his parents' house, and later to the family of his new wife. Under these circumstances he cannot take his children with him unless they are so big that they themselves desire it. If the woman's unfaithfulness is the cause of the divorce, she will be evicted from the house, and not until later will her family come and fetch her personal property such as clay vessels, *yicas*, harvest of forest fruit, plus any goats and sheep. The children then stay with the father and can be brought up by his mother or some other female relative. It is always a general rule that at divorces the injured party retains house and children, and only the personal property is divided. However, it is not always that things go according to rule. Often, for example, an injured woman and her mother will visit her divorced husband's new house when he is away, remove his personal things and perhaps burn down the house.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognised is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both [587] morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can [589] only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will [682] always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss 684 of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account 628

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

NIELS FOCK
University of Copenhagen,
July 1961.

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
● 647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

000 of small stones contained in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

764 "They bury their dead very close to the surface, being satisfied to dig a shallow pit into which they place the corpse half sitting up, with a few small branches beneath and on top of him and a little earth. Because of this it often comes about that jaguars, who can easily dig up these careless graves, get a taste for human flesh and become man-eaters. Sometimes the Indians put a little pot of water in the grave for the deceased's benefit. They also commonly burn a few things which he had used, and also his hut. The relatives of the deceased have to go to his burial place and lament over it, accompanying their cries with the pimpin. These wailings, according to the locality, are repeated for some days. They have also other [177] customs which they have picked up from the Tobas, to whom they are related and with whom they are friendly."

181 "It can be seen, then, that the Mataco tribe is at present a very miserable one. Their way of living and their customs, furthermore, ● 648 and the circumstances of our times together with the region in which they live do not point to a particularly happy future. It certainly cannot be said that the Matacos who live in Bolivian territory are declared enemies of the [607] whites or Christians, rather is it true that they sometimes work for them and say that they are friends of the whites and wish to be treated as such, in spite of the fact that this friendship seems feigned, a cloak under which they can the better steal and conceal themselves. They rustle the Christians' cattle which they exchange with the Tobas for horses, and these in turn they trade off to the Christians for other things they need, saying that they have captured these animals from their enemies."

181 "Across from the Mission of San Francisco de Pilcomayo and 787 on the banks of the river (the Pilcomayo River--Translator) are the ruins of the Mission of San Antonio, made up of Matacos brought together in 1863 and which, after having been in Bella Esperanza for two or three years were transferred to this place, where they stayed, in quite sizeable numbers, until 1879, in which year they escaped, although groups of them had fled and returned more than once before. While they remained at the Mission little or nothing could be accomplished with them in any way--they would not even consent to allowing their little children to be baptized when at the point of death. The

1:Pelleschi--68 C-5 (ca 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

Bulletin of the [redacted]
Argentine Geographic Institute

Volume XVIII

[173] The Mataco Indians and their Language

by
Juan Pelleschi
Civil Engineer

PART ONE

Chapter I

Geographic Situation

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The Matacos are hemmed in on the West by the Salta border line and on the East by the Toba frontier. Caught thus between two enemies, they have of necessity formed alliances, the Eastern Matacos with the Tobas and the Western Matacos with the white colonists, each group warring upon the other. In spite of this division the Matacos hold to their common language jealously, although it is true that there are slight dialectal differences to be noted. Thus, for example, the Eastern Matacos almost invariably say "quiâ" and "tzâ" where their Western counterparts would say "châ," regardless of the fact that any one of these expressions is employed without difficulty by members of the same tribe. The same happens with "quiô," "tzô," "chô"; for example: "doe" can be "tzonaj," "quionâj."

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721

Each nation of Indians has its own territory and will go to war over the smallest patch of land just as we would. The land is also subdivided among the tribes of one nation and these may not overstep their bounds without causing war. These wars are very frequent for the many reasons set down elsewhere and because of the marauding spirit which dominates the Indians -- thus it is that whenever they learn that a tribe [174] has become rich, for one reason or another, in animals or

C M 763 775 554 766 550

man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

M C 755 753 [756]

In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines, treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a'hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

M● C 648● 755

Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

Chaco Indians SK4

ignorant whites, in their turn, have a great deal of faith in the Indian witch doctors. C M 755

I know for a fact that rich ranchers have called Indians to come and treat them. 648

The witch doctors attempt to cure their patients by exorcising the a'hots by shouting, leaping, and blowing and spitting into the sick person's mouth. They prescribe, along with this exorcising activity, certain homeopathic remedies such as dieting, bathing and I believe massaging also. M 755

The faith which they place in their incantations does not wane even in the presence of white man's medicine.

It happened once while we were on board the river boat that the boat stuck fast in the mud. A number of Indians surrounded us and a group of them brought forward a sick Indian for us to cure. We did not have our interpreter with us on that occasion, but I was able to put my notes to some use and finally understood that the invalid had been bitten by a snake: -- "Chiasquietáj-Kíá" -- "snake-bite remedy" was what they were saying. M 123 755

We had a small medicine chest and hurriedly applied ammonia to the bite. It was extremely important for us that the outcome of our ministrations be a positive one for we needed to gain prestige and also friends among the Indians, for relations were strained and some days previously we had been ambushed by a group of them who had then fired on us at point blank range.

Our patient, however, improved very slowly and there were times during the first three days -- a superstitiously critical period -- in which we had serious doubts of his recovering, because the swelling kept growing upwards towards the groin and belly and, if it had reached the area close to the heart all would have been over for him.

During this whole period of treatment -- which was carried on in a pretty rigorous fashion, [210] the situation hardly calling for ladies with kid gloves -- the patient took only water, as the witch doctors prescribed, and then, during the night while the crew slept, the doctors would begin to chant húu húu húu... hée hée hée... híi híi híi... and then once more húu húu húu, etc. Every now and again they would spit and blow like so many bellows upon the wound and other parts of the body, keeping this up for hours on end.

Those pots which are used to contain water have an indented waistline around which a rope may be passed when they need to be transported. This rope, running around the jar, is slipped over the carrier's forehead and the vessel is carried on his back, to which effect he must bend back and neck forward. This manner of transportation is no where near as graceful as that of carrying jars on the head as our country women do, and rather makes the Indian women look like beasts of burden -- however, it may well be a more hygienic way and is, in any case, more practical when traveling along half choked forest paths.

They have no knowledge of, and do not practice, agriculture; yet they do sometimes plant corn (which, as is well known, originated in America) and also pumpkins. When they think it is time to go and eat the crop, they harvest it. They do not grind the corn, but boil it and the pumpkins also while they are yet green -- a harvest, then, is gathered in piece meal and lasts quite a long time. In order to sow they make use of a hard wood spade in the form of a small oar, or a large spear head; the husband makes a hole in the earth, his squaw throws in the seed, covers it, and that is all. The seed is sown in a recently burned off, damp field, that is, one which has just been rained on.

The crop is owned communally by all, but they are nigardly with it concerning outsiders. While we were on the ship, most of our food having run out, we hungered for fresh provisions and vegetables, for we had been without them for more than three months. When the Indians made us a present of pumpkins and ears of corn we were more than delighted. These Indians were friendly, but later on their friendliness proved false for they killed our interpreter. The sailors managed to discover the location of the pumpkin patch and corn field and raided them by stealth. On the following day, when they returned to the cultivated plots they found that everything had been destroyed and not a single growing plant was left. We were never able to find even one of the Indians.

It seems, also, that the whites do not want the Indians to take up agriculture. I was told that the white settlers once [215] came upon a number of fields sown by friendly frontier Indians, and destroyed them so completely that the discouraged Indians had never again planted so much as a handbreadth of land. This action

stemmed from the desire which the whites have of keeping the Indians from settling and taking possession (a fact recognized by Argentine law) of the excellent land which the local whites look upon as legitimate prey for the future.

They do not indulge in commercial enterprises; and how could they possibly do so when they have no agriculture or industries, being only wanderers and nomads? However, they do practice barter on a small scale, which is their only form of primitive, embryonic commerce. They do not have words for "buying and selling," and in order to express this idea it would seem that they had gone to some of school of economics to learn the exchange formula do ut des, for, strangely enough the Matacos, for example, instead of saying "sell me" say atquiocq niquiocq, which means "give me I give you."

One can gather from this that they have no form of money; but they have invented a word to signify our coins, which is tdócq kynat among the Matacos and which means hide or skin of metal. Kynat is a generic word which covers all metals which do not exist or circulate in the Chaco. It would appear from this that it is a word invented prior to the appearance of paper money.

Nevertheless there is a sort of medium of exchange, though in only an incipient stage, among the inhabitants of the Chaco. It is a substance which the Indians use to paint themselves with and which is highly valued by them even in the smallest amounts. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra the plant which produces it is called urucú. This paint is obtained by boiling the fruit of the urucú for twenty-four hours, when the coloring matter floats to the top and is collected and made into small pellets of varying sizes. The dye is exuded from the skin of the fruit, which is about the size of an orange. The fruit with a blackist skin produces a black dye, the one with yellow skin gives an orange or red dye and the fruit having a white skin produces a green dye. The skin on the yellow and white varieties is about as thick as the outer covering on a walnut. Each one of the three grows on a different kind of urucú, all of which are plants which grow to be about as tall as a man, with fruit about the size of a pomegranate which split open of their own accord when they are ripe.

Although this substance is produced and made in Bolivia, it is current among all the Chaco Indians and is used by them to

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133 the river Pilcomayo, following its sinuous course, and this is practically the only way known to white people hitherto. An explorer who undertook to penetrate at random into the interior of the unknown country east of the river, without being accompained by Indian guides, would be almost sure to perish from thirst within a few days. Many promising expeditions into the Chaco have ended disastrously in this way. Only the natives know where the few water places are to be found. Generally these consist of small pools, the stinking brown or green water of which seems almost undrinkable to a white man; but the explorer soon finds it good enough even for him and it will save the life both of man and beast

• 148 Another danger to the explorer is the hostility of the savage natives who inhabit the country. This aspect of the Chaco tribes has become almost proverbial owing to the fact that several explorers have met a disastrous end at the hands of the savage Indians. In our own days the best known of these unfortunate explorers are Crevaux, Ibareta, and Boggiani, of whom the first mentioned was killed by the Toba Indians on the banks of the Rio Pilcomayo, at the place which still bears his name. Several expeditions have tried to explore the country, following the course of the Pilcomayo down to its confluence with the Rio Paraguay, but the first which succeeded was the Bolivian expediton under D. Campos in 1883. The interior of the Chaco, however, is still to a great extent unknown, and ethnographic exploration of this interesting country did not begin until a few decades ago.

114 The above description of the Chaco has particular reference to the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco and more especially to the regions on both sides of the river Pilcomayo, of which I have acquired personal knowledge. My ethnological studies have in fact been limited to the most important of the tribes inhabiting that region, tribes which, when I first visited them, were very imperfectly known. The Pilcomayo is the largest of the few affluents that the great river Paraguay receives from the west. For the main part of its course the river flows through very little known country, and the tribes that have settled on its banks or roam about on the grassy plains or in the thickets of the interior still live completely — or at any rate did live at the time when I visited them — in a state of nature. The most important of these tribes are the Mataco, the Choroti, the Tobas, and the Ashluslay, who live partly on the right (Argentine), partly on the left (Bolivian) side of the river. The Mataco, the Choroti, and the Ashluslay, who linguistically are closely related to each other, form a group of their own. The Tobas, although a typical Chaco tribe, both

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guaya moderna is essentially a compilation founded on the works of Campos, Cardús, and other writers [1]). The same holds true of the monograph of Father Ducci which, besides, only deals with one sub-tribe of the Tobas on the lower Pilcomayo. [2])

The ethnological studies of the Toba tribe contained in this book mainly refer, as appears from my previous statements, to the Bolivian Tobas, but also to the Toba Pilagá of Argentine. I met the latter at the sugar factories of Esperanza in June 1912, and moreover, some of my Indian informants in Bolivia were from Argentine or had lived among their kinsmen there. The general culture of the Pilagá, as already pointed out, is much the same as that of the Bolivian Tobas, although on the whole they seem to have preserved their old customs better than the latter.

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The third tribe visited by me were the *Mataco*. Next to the Tobas, the Mataco form the largest of the Argentine Chaco tribes, but only a part of them may still be said to live in a state of nature. Three principal Mataco tribes can be distinguished. One of them inhabits the corner in northern Argentine roughly limited by Tartagal in the west and Rio Bermejo — an affluent of the Pilcomayo — in the south. These Mataco are called Vejós and are those most strongly influenced by civilization. The second tribe, known under the name of Mataco-Guisnay, lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo about ten leagues south of Fortín Guachalla. The third tribe, called Mataco-Nocténes — occupies the great triangle roughly formed by lines connecting the villages Yacuiba, Villa Montes, and Crevaux. Those Nocténes who live on the right bank of the Pilcomayo, between Villa Montes and Crevaux, have preserved their original culture best. Among these Indians I spent about one month in October and November 1912. They are culturally closely related to the Tobas living on the other side of the river, and intermarriage between the two tribes is frequent. Still the Nocténes speak their own language which, apart from certain dialectal differences, is the same as that spoken by the Vejós and the Guisnay. The Mataco language shows great affinity to the Choroti language which justifies us in referring both tribes to one and the same principal group. A third Chaco tribe of the same group are probably the Ashluslay, the language of which is unfortunately so far quite unknown to us.

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[1]) Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya moderna*. Asunción, 1900.

[2]) Fray Zacarias Ducci, *Los Tobas de Taccagalé con arte y vocabulario Toba-castellano*. Buenos Aires, 1904.

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361 181 In Chaco, both the primitive methods of constructing the houses and the peculiar character of the social life must to a great deal be explained by the fact that the Chaco Indians are nomads, unable to remain long in any one place and driven by resistless forces from one part of the country to another. Both their enemies, partly other Indian tribes, partly men of an altogether different race, and nature itself have always compelled them to live a nomadic life. It is a well known fact that the interior of the Chaco has for many centuries been a place of refuge for savage tribes driven to these inhospitable regions against their own will, under the pressure of superior forces. Still more do natural conditions force the Indians to wander: vast inundations at certain seasons, complete lack of water at others, and a variety of considerations arising from the necessity of obtaining a livelihood. When pasture or game is getting scarce in one place, the Indans change their abode and move to another place where it is easier to feed their flocks and to eke out their store of food by hunting. Agriculture, although practised to a very limited extent, may also at times compel the Chaco Indians to seek new dwelling-places. But — as Mr. Grubb rightly observes with special reference to the Lenguas of Paraguay — the Chaco Indian is often driven to forsake home and friends merely by his restless spirit, »the result of generations of hard and peculiar circumstances fixing a habit upon him which becomes second nature». The mere desire to wander and to get a change, or perhaps to see relatives and friends living in another part of the country, may induce an Indian to abandon his house and to move away with his wife and children and his whole property. Superstition works in the same direction. When a death occurs in a house, that house is as a general rule destroyed and burnt, and if an epidemic causes several deaths within a short time, the whole village is destroyed and thereafter abandoned by its inhabitants. The Indians cannot persuade themselves to continue living in a place which is evidently haunted by evil spirits.

361 ● 648 Distant savage Chaco tribes have been in the habit of abandoning and destroying their villages after they have been visited by white men. In some cases the Indians, as soon as they have got to know through their spies that a party of white men are approaching, have burnt their villages and retired to the interior, unexplored parts of the country. Both Nordenskiöld and other travellers have noted with astonishment this custom of the Chaco tribes. Its true motives are to be sought partly in a natural fear of the whites, of whom the Indians have frequently had sad experience, but above all in superstitious dread of the mysterious disease-spirits

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which the strangers are believed to bring with them. The whole place, according to the idea of the Indians, has become infected as it were by the new-comers. Besides, the Indians understand that one party of white men is soon followed by another.

It is natural that the Chaco Indians should not care to bestow great labour on dwellings which in all probability will house them only for a short time, or in general, to arrange their life more comfortably in a place which they will probably soon be obliged to desert for ever. Apart from this, the Chaco Indian, who is perfectly suited to his environment, constructs his houses precisely in the way he thinks is most practical and of the material which is most easily obtainable. In the interior parts of the Chaco there are no large trees affording material for the construction of more substantial and durable houses. On the other hand, the scraggy trees and bushes in which the Chaco forests abound and the grassy plains provide building material in abundance, always within reach and excellent for the needs of the Indians. The beehive shaped huts of the primitive Chaco tribes therefore do not, as a certain ethnological school asserts, represent a type of human dwelling essentially characteristic of tribes at the lowest stages of cultural development, but must be wholly explained by the natural conditions. Like the Fuegians, who in their general culture are closely related to the Chaco tribes, the latter are not, on the whole, any lower in the scale of human development than most other tribes in tropical or sub-tropical South America, although nature may allow these to construct habitations of a higher type.

The same reasoning evidently accounts for the fact that the Pilcomayo tribes, although they are dependent on the river and to a great extent subsist by fishing, do not use canoes or craft of any kind. Whereas »dug-outs» of the kind customary among the South American Indians are commonly used by the Lenguas and other tribes of the river Paraguay, the Choroti, Mataco, Tobas, and Ashluslay have not even thought of constructing such vessels, obviously because the large timber trees from which canoes could be dug out are not obtainable in their country.

I have mentioned that agriculture is only practised by the Chaco tribes on a very limited scale, which of course is due to the dryness of the climate. Among all tribes the land is common property, and within this territory each family has a small plot of land allotted to it, or once taken possession of, which they are supposed to possess as long as they actually cultivate it. Pumpkin, *santia* (water melon), and beans are the principal crops of the Choroti; maize and manioc are also cultivated, but the drought

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Chapter X.

Visiting. Communication with other tribes. Trade.

●648 Within the different sub-tribes there is frequent visiting between the families, and similarly there is frequent communication between those sub-tribes which live on a friendly footing with one another. The Choroti likewise have intercourse with certain foreign tribes, especially with the Ashluslay on the lower Pilcomayo and the Tapiete and the Avas on the northern course of the river. With the Mataco on the other hand, the Choroti have at times had strained relations, and the warlike Tobas they fear, avoiding as far as possible having anything to do with them. The friendly intercourse and trade between certain Chaco tribes, who perhaps live at great distances from one another, is of considerable ethnological interest.

574 Among all Indians, visiting is always a more or less ceremonial matter, but in the Chaco these ceremonies are comparatively simple. In their everyday life, when meeting out on the plain or in the forest, the Indians do not use any particular words of salutation. On the other hand, when an [576] Indian pays a visit to another house, and especially when he visits the house of a neighbouring tribe, he, on entering, only pronounces a word equivalent to »I come», »I arrive»; in the Choroti and Mataco language this is *kañām*, in the Toba language *nóvyi*. The host only answers with a word which means, »it is good» (in the Choroti language *eis*, in the Mataco and Ashluslay language *is*, in the Toba *nóin* or *nōtta*). The guest can now take a seat at the door but keeps silence until he is spoken to. This is the rule in all cases where the guest is known and regarded as a friend. If algaroba beer and food is offered to him, this is a particular sign of friendship, and the guest may thereafter speak and move about freely as if he were at home. On the other hand, when the visitor is not welcome but regarded with hatred and suspicion the Indians turn the back and

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to barter with those whom they look upon as their friends and to whom they are paying the visit in question. It is not considered proper that outsiders, be they Indians of other villages or whites, should interfere.

I may add that my own barter with the Indians always had the character of an exchange of presents. When I visited the Indian villages where I was known, I usually received presents of fish, fruits, etc., but it was always understood that these presents should be paid back in some form. Similarly, when I myself gave the Indians presents I usually received something in return, except when the presents — for instance the necessary presents of tobacco — were regarded as a natural tribute wich I had to pay for permission to stay in the village. Everyone who travels among Indians should bear in mind that Indian hospitality always means that something must be given in return, and that the traveller who neglects his duty on this point will necessarily be regarded as greedy.

The Functions of the Chief

627 The ex-chief of the San Andrés region, on the Pilcomayo river, was the famous Cuchitoro, who received three leagues of land along the river from the government of Argentina. The present day chief of this region is called Santiago, and he was made chief by the white colonizers who hoped to win him to their service. Nevertheless, Santiago remained loyal to his people.

The principal functions of the chief, according to their [648] description to me at San Andrés, consist nowadays in representing his tribe before the whites and in patching up, amicably, any conflicts 622 arising between groups of Indians in his territory. If a murder is com- 627 mitted in one group it is the chief's duty to require the killer's family 682 to pay the blood price. The amount of such compensation depends upon the social status of the victim. If it is a matter of an old and inactive man the loss is considered of little importance and a couple of goats and an old rifle are sufficient to re-establish friendly relations between the victim's and the murderer's groups. In other cases the injured party demands a horse, three goats, a rifle, etc. If the blood price is put too high the chief in charge of the matter may seek out the head of the dead man's family and ask him to lower the price. [14]

682 In former times the law of an eye for an eye was meticulously carried out. The Indians of San Andrés had killed a man from a neighboring village whose inhabitants then emigrated to the Bermejo river. Fifteen years later a nephew of the dead man made the entire trip from the Bemejo to the Pilcomayo to square matters with the murderers and killed, in his turn, one of the Indians of the village. He then returned to the Bermejo without being pursued.

726 The last Indian war took place in the San Andrés region in 1928. The people of the village of San Martín attacked San Andrés, under cover of darkness. Firing continued until daylight, but--as often happens in these battles--no one was killed or wounded. Some time later the people of Yuto joined with the inhabitants of San Andrés to attack the San Martín Indians. They passed by the Mission composed and dressed for war, painted and adorned with feathers. Before the attack they executed a war dance in the bed of the Pilcomayo river,

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Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 799 177 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171] M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./

771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
169 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
177 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci
131 The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
197 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
177 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 262 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

181 "The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
● [671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

462 "The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
[241] indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[283] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

881 "When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for
[578] there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[831] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks» must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

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Toba S112

of the Old Men (*Eakachi*) intervenes, and they may subject the culprit to corporal punishment or exile him.

Only among the Tobas can we speak of a sort of Court of Justice, the Council of the Old Men (*Eakachi*) mentioned before. These men have to intervene in disputes and quarrels, but at the great drinking-feasts they are — just as among the Choroti — assisted by the women who do their best to part the disputing men. For an outrage committed in a state of drunkenness extenuating circumstances are found and the offender is generally exiled for a longer or shorter time. If such deeds however are repeated and the Indian proves dangerous to his fellow-tribesmen, he may be expelled from the community for ever. This for instance was the fate of the great Toba chief Taycolique, as I have mentioned before.

In other offences the culprit may, among the Tobas, be subjected to corporal punishment. A casual adultery is one of those comparatively slight offences which the offended Indian may himself punish if he likes, and a Toba man may in such cases beat his unfaithful wife. It is to be noticed that in a case of adultery the offended Indian does not generally punish the seducer but on the other hand frequently chastises his unfaithful wife, considering her to be more culpable.

Real murders, as far as I know, never take place within the community, and blood-revenge is only practised in the feuds fought out between the different tribes. Blood-revenge forms part and parcel of the warfare of the Indians.

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837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and [586] chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints [822] of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

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family will then be sent to the killer's village to ask whether the murdered woman's husband was at home the night before. If the answer is negative the murderer is known, and the families of the two victims will take up their arms and prepare to attack the killer's village. However, this was often merely a move undertaken to ensure the payment of blood money, compensation for the two lives, by the murderer's family. 628 682

Another example of the fatal results of a woman's infidelity is bound up in a custom that clearly shows the cruelty that formerly prevailed among the Mataco. If a man discovered that his wife had a lover, he could pretend ignorance and privately watch their habits and meeting place. One day he would follow his wife and wait in hiding until he could surprise the pair asleep. First he would kill his rival with an arrow, and then overpower the wife and cut her throat. He then dragged her out on to the path with legs far apart, slit up her stomach and lay her lover on top. The husband then crept back to his hut, seating himself at the fire with his bow and arrow in his hand waiting to see what would happen. Someone would soon come by the scene of the crime and come running back to the village, whereupon the man fled into the forest. As he could not be found a start was made with burying the two victims. In the meantime the murderer had crept close in and could hear what the wife's family said about him. At the moment they lowered the wife's corpse into the grave, and all eyes were looking down, the man shot one more arrow, killing the brother of the murdered woman. He then fled at great speed, reached his village and informed his family of the slaughter of the three persons. Both his father's and his mother's bands then armed themselves, and shortly afterwards the bands connected with the wife and the rival arrived to attack the village. This case is not merely a story, but a typical instance showing how adultery with the Mataco frequently leads to homicide and blood feuds between different bands. 152 628 682

Unfaithfulness is one of the chief reasons for divorce, which is a quite frequent occurrence with the Mataco. If on account of infidelity a man is divorced from his wife, he himself leaves the house taking with him only his personal effects such as fishing net, tinder, bow and arrow etc. He moves first to his parents' house, and later to the family of his new wife. Under these circumstances he cannot take his children with him unless they are so big that they themselves desire it. If the woman's unfaithfulness is the cause of the divorce, she will be evicted from the house, and not until later will her family come and fetch her personal property such as clay vessels, *yicas*, harvest of forest fruit, plus any goats and sheep. The children then stay with the father and can be brought up by his mother or some other female relative. It is always a general rule that at divorces the injured party retains house and children, and only the personal property is divided. However, it is not always that things go according to rule. Often, for example, an injured woman and her mother will visit her divorced husband's new house when he is away, remove his personal things and perhaps burn down the house. 586 [183] [578]

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586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

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/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about. Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of
● [684] the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two of three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, 591 doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having 684 affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

595 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

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582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyl*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

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of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

NIELS FOCK
University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

In order to gather together in a common place, in addition to the tracks they leave they twist branches and handsful of grass at crossroads in order that their companions may know where to find them, they having prearranged the meaning of the signs. 487 201

[193] Another means of communication is by making fires. During our traveling about the Chaco we were continually surrounded by fires, either at close quarters or far away, fires which sometimes took on the proportions of colossal blazes. And often, when we thought that we were in absolute solitude, it would happen that upon approaching an Indian village we would be informed that we were expected, and we would hear tell of the order which had been observed in our march. 202

They make use, moreover, of many spies and informers. In Mataco the former are called niguaiecque, and the latter gu'éicáss. 701 ● [203]

They apparently do have some sort of tactical organization: thus they have a general chief, subordinate chief and petty chieftains. The first is called, in Mataco, canniat tizán, the second, canniat, and as for the last, I have forgotten.

The general chiefs are chosen at second remove, that is, from among the subordinate chiefs, who, in turn, are elected by the people. Normally a marked preference is shown for the late chief's sons, provided they be of age, courageous and good. But then, of course, we must say that in these elections the same passions are present which appear amongst us in our elections.

They also have another category of persons, whom they call nyát and corresponds vaguely to the Spanish "caballero" or the "galantuomo" of southern Italy. So it is that they refer to any white persons whom they consider of quality with the name nyát. It is to be supposed that a like distinction is made among the other Indians. In Peru and wherever the Quechua language is spoken, gentlemen are called Viracocha. [554] [609]

Once the general chief has been elected the subordinate elector chiefs go to call on him when they can, which visits are celebrated with the accustomed drinking and eating orgies. A general chieftainship almost always embraces villages far removed from each other.

The Matacos call those who visit them tzicki-ác.

The authorities among the Chaco Indians play an almost purely military role. In peace time they lose practically all their prestige,

although they retain their position of ministers of "foreign affairs," 701
representing the tribe before outsiders either to treat some matter,
or to form an alliance for either war or peace. And even then
their leadership is not of much value for the members of the tribe,
the populace, are free to refuse to go to war -- although actually
their pride only rarely allows them to hold back.

When a chief plans an attack he gets the advice of the old 721
men of the tribe and of other influential persons, and if these do
not set their approval upon his plan he nevertheless invites those
who will to follow him.

Sometimes, though, large scale invasions are planned by
the allied chiefs of several villages. When we arrived at the vil-
lage of Chaguaral, we found there a group of eleven or thirteen
chiefs, all Matacos, who were awaiting the arrival of [194] their
allies with whom, shortly thereafter, they invaded the territory
of other Matacos who three months earlier had given them a good
drubbing.

While they are on their way to wage war they vociferate 726
wildly, shouting both threateningly and happily. They dye part [302]
of their faces and bodies black and sometimes muss up their al-
ready unkempt hair until they look like "lost souls," in the opinion
of a Christian Indian. On the eve of battle, those who have the
wherewithal deck their hair, waist and ankles with feathers, pre-
ferring red or yellow ones, and tie any rag they may have with
them tightly about their midriffs. When combat begins they
break out with the most bloodcurdling yells.

This business of putting on warpaint is common to almost 730
all savages: it was the custom also among those whom the Romans
called barbarians; for example, according to Claudius the
Sigambrians used to dye their hair a brilliant red before going into
battle.

The chiefs have the place of honour in the thickest of the 726
battle, which always results in the death of some of them. If the 622
invaders win, they sack everything, capture the women, the 727
children and cattle, parcel out the booty and set fire to the vil-
lage.

They give no quarter to the warriors and only rarely do they 727
spare the lives of the older women because they distrust them as

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

T M 291

by the whites even in their dress, but those sub-tribes who still live in a state of nature keep the body almost wholly uncovered or only wear clothes consisting of animals' skins or cotton or woollen waist-clothes and mantles of their own make, just as is the case with the Choroti. The Catholic missionary Cardús, who visited the Tobas about fifty years ago, relates that the majority of the men used to go entirely naked, only wearing a small apron of skin or stuff. When they went out hunting or to battle they wore a jacket or a breast-plate of tiger's skin. Although nowadays the Tobas commonly use articles of clothing obtained from the whites, they are still frequently seen to go almost naked, only wearing a small waist-cloth, especially when the weather is hot or when they are working. The women, according to the same writer, used to have a small apron of fox, deer, or tiger's skin tied at the waist, which reached down to the knees. The hairy side of the skin was turned inwards and the outside was painted in different colours and figures. Nowadays, as I have already mentioned, the dress of the Toba and the Mataco women in Bolivia is the *tipoy*, a sort of long gown or shirt made of red or some other brightly coloured stuff which covers the whole body leaving only the arms bare.

C M 291 [713]

Both the Choroti and the Mataco men on certain occasions wear a kind of coarse shirt made of the fibres of the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). These shirts are mainly worn as a protection for the body against the thorny bushes when wandering in the forests, but also as armour in battle, since the arrows of the enemy are supposed not to penetrate these thick shirts. As a protection for the feet again the men, when hunting in the forest, sometimes wear a sort of sandal or leggings roughly made of deer or tapir hide. The head is always kept uncovered by the Chaco tribes or is only covered by ostrich plumes and the purely ornamental headgear which forms part and parcel of festive attire.

M 342

The houses of the Pilcomayo tribes are all of the same exceedingly primitive construction, or at any rate have originally been of the same type. They are round, conical, or beehive-shaped huts, constructed by a number of boughs of trees fixed in the ground in a circle and tied together at the upper ends. This erection is covered with rushes, grass, and palm-leaves down to the ground so as to form a rough thatch. A small opening is left for an entrance or door, which is so narrow that the inhabitants are obliged to enter the hut on all fours. The whole hut, varying from six to ten feet high in the centre, is too low to allow a man to stand erect, and the grass thatch so loose that the abode offers only a poor shelter

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used industrially! the yuchan and the châguar (which has fiber serviceable in making rope) [192] as they are to be found over an enormous territory and grow without need of cultivation, would be of great commercial value.

Another interesting tree that has domestic use and may some day be employed industrially is the pacara (Enterolobium timboiva). It is a tree of great beauty, very tall, of large girth and having a great deal of foliage -- it is of the mimosa family. Its fruit is a flat, oblong, twisted pod of a dark chestnut color about an inch and a half long and which contains 12 percent to 15 percent of saponin. This pod is used [388] to get the grease out of clothes and wool.

To finish as we had started, I must add that the Indians are great 273 lovers of the alcoholic beverages common among the whites, and become so drunk as to be floored. Even in this detail are they like those who are not their brothers in Christ.

Chapter VII

Wars

The Indians are much addicted to wars, it must be confessed, 721 ● and they are perpetually fighting; it is -- if I may be allowed the expression -- a continual giving and taking.

One war follows another, either because the vanquished wish to avenge their previous losses or because the victors have begun to enjoy their victories. Causes for war are: having fished, hunted or harvested in foreign territory, or the need to annul an offence or the hope of gain.

These wars are not strategic ones in which one battle follows another until the enemy is helpless to defend himself; rather are they surprise attacks on camps with the object of overwhelming and pillaging them and carrying off cattle, boys and sometimes even women.

This is why the camps or villages, in forested regions, always 361 have flanks and back right up against the deep woods, where, if surprised, the inhabitants may find refuge, and where it would be impossible to pursue them as there is a veritable labyrinth of paths known only to the inhabitants of the village.

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or to form an alliance for either war or peace. And even then
their leadership is not of much value for the members of the tribe,
the populace, are free to refuse to go to war -- although actually
their pride only rarely allows them to hold back.

When a chief plans an attack he gets the advice of the old 721
men of the tribe and of other influential persons, and if these do
not set their approval upon his plan he nevertheless invites those
who will to follow him.

Sometimes, though, large scale invasions are planned by
the allied chiefs of several villages. When we arrived at the vil-
lage of Chaguaral, we found there a group of eleven or thirteen
chiefs, all Matacos, who were awaiting the arrival of [194] their
allies with whom, shortly thereafter, they invaded the territory
of other Matacos who three months earlier had given them a good
drubbing.

While they are on their way to wage war they vociferate 726
wildly, shouting both threateningly and happily. They dye part
of their faces and bodies black and sometimes muss up their al- [302]
ready unkempt hair until they look like "lost souls," in the opinion
of a Christian Indian. On the eve of battle, those who have the
wherewithal deck their hair, waist and ankles with feathers, pre-
ferring red or yellow ones, and tie any rag they may have with
them tightly about their midriffs. When combat begins they
break out with the most bloodcurdling yells.

This business of putting on warpaint is common to almost 000
all savages: it was the custom also among those whom the Romans
called barbarians; for example, according to Claudius the
Sigambrians used to dye their hair a brilliant red before going into
battle.

The chiefs have the place of honour in the thickest of the 726
battle, which always results in the death of some of them. If the 622
invaders win, they sack everything, capture the women, the 727
children and cattle, parcel out the booty and set fire to the vil-
lage.

They give no quarter to the warriors and only rarely do they 727
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that invasion took place which we had seen in preparation in the village of Chaguaral. Unfortunately moths got into it and ruined it, and I had no other recourse but to throw it out since it was no longer worth sending to Italy together with some skulls and other objects I had collected. 727

This custom of scalp taking is common to all the Indians hereabouts, and is also indulged in by those living in North America. The strange thing is that it was also practiced by the Scythians.

The Germans also were in the habit of drinking from the skulls of their fallen enemies. Who does not know about Albuin the Longobard who made his wife Rosamund drink from her father's skull some 1300 years ago? [171]

This Indian practice reminds me of something which, in my opinion, reflects the sagacity of these savages:

I was with the colonel of the regiment which was on duty on the frontier, on one of his periodic visits. Near a fort where an Indian tribe was camped the son of the general chief came to see him, (the chief himself did not make an appearance since he wished the colonel to call on him first) and made us a present of some very good and delicious aloja. As it happened that he had just returned from a raid upon the Tobas we asked him if he had not brought back a few scalps. The Indian, as though seeking an excuse for his cruelty said: "The Tobas take the scalps of white men and we take the scalps of the Tobas."

On this same occasion, seeing me dressed in the manner of country people, surrounded by army officers and standing beside the colonel who treated me with great consideration and respect, the Indians whispered among themselves: "Who do you suppose this one is?" And the more sophisticated answered "he must be some president or other!"

It seemed to me as I heard this idle chatter and banter that I was in the midst of a thickly crowded mass of our own lower classes.

[196] One of the superstitions among these Indians is to sally forth on their raiding expeditions with the new moon. They appear to attribute some magical virtue to it, yet they do not 721 ● 821

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

of the Old Men (*Eakachi*) intervenes, and they may subject the culprit to corporal punishment or exile him.

Only among the Tobas can we speak of a sort of Court of Justice, the Council of the Old Men (*Eakachi*) mentioned before. These men have to intervene in disputes and quarrels, but at the great drinking-feasts they are — just as among the Choroti — assisted by the women who do their best to part the disputing men. For an outrage committed in a state of drunkenness extenuating circumstances are found and the offender is generally exiled for a longer or shorter time. If such deeds however are repeated and the Indian proves dangerous to his fellow-tribesmen, he may be expelled from the community for ever. This for instance was the fate of the great Toba chief Taycolique, as I have mentioned before.

In other offences the culprit may, among the Tobas, be subjected to corporal punishment. A casual adultery is one of those comparatively slight offences which the offended Indian may himself punish if he likes, and a Toba man may in such cases beat his unfaithful wife. It is to be noticed that in a case of adultery the offended Indian does not generally punish the seducer but on the other hand frequently chastises his unfaithful wife, considering her to be more culpable.

Real murders, as far as I know, never take place within the community, and blood-revenge is only practised in the feuds fought out between the different tribes. Blood-revenge forms part and parcel of the warfare of the Indians.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

the Jibaro Indians [1]). But the way of waging wars is about the same among all South American Indians, and in particular, the customs of the Tobas, as far as I know them, substantially agree with, for instance, those of the Lenguas as described by Grubb. As far as the victory feasts are concerned, the customs of the Chaco Indians are not in any way comparable with those of the Jibaros, which stand alone for their richness in complicated rites and ceremonies.

The history of the Tobas shows that they have in former times been a real scourge to the neighbouring tribes, and the white settlers on the Pilcomayo some 30 years ago were constantly in danger of attack. In our days the Tobas have become more stationary and in the same degree more peaceful. The most warlike Toba tribe are the Pilagá in the Argentine Chaco who have waged war particularly against the Ashluslay on the other side of the Pilcomayo with a view to depriving them of the possession of that river.

The most important causes of the wars among the Chaco Indians have been vendetta and trespass upon foreign land. Whereas blood-revenge does not occur within the same tribe, it is commonly enjoined by custom as a duty in the relation of the different tribes to each other. But behind the blood-feuds there are often earlier quarrels, especially about boundaries. In an inhospitable country like Chaco, where agriculture is rendered difficult and game is comparatively scarce, the possession of a river like the Pilcomayo, extremely rich in fish, is naturally of great importance. Many feuds have been fought out between the Chaco tribes for the possession of this river. Both for the sake of the river and for the sake of the pasture necessary for the flocks, the Chaco tribes have fixed limits dividing the territory of one tribe from that of another. These limits are commonly recognized, and trespassing, when it is wilfully done, may become a cause of war. Father Lozano relates that the Tobas living in the region of Tucumán used a kind of boundary mark consisting of long forked poles, and that upon the points of these poles they used to hang the skulls of those who had attempted to enter the territory of others. [2])

Other causes of war among the Chaco tribes are the greed for acquiring the flocks and herds of another tribe and the desire to steal women. How far witchcraft, which has so often given rise to sanguinary feuds among the Indians, has played a part in the wars of the Tobas, I am not able to

[1]) See my *Blood-Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of Ethnology. Bull. 79. 1923).

[2]) Lozano, *op. cit.* I. 99.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

M 721

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M 726

When an attack against an enemy is planned, the old men of each tribe (*eakáchi*) together with the chiefs (*alyánek*) assemble every night to deliberate in a special place outside the village. Much algaroba beer is drunk on this occasion in order that the deliberations may lead to a happy result. In the shade of a big algaroba tree the old men invoke the »good spirit» (*peyák nôin*) so that he may give the warriors victory and protect them in the coming fight. The younger Toba men perform the dance *Nomi* for several days. Each sub-tribe marches out to war headed by its chief. But since these chiefs are often aged persons, too weak to perform their duty in the expedition successfully, a special leader is as a rule appointed by the old men when a war expedition is planned. This leader is generally a younger brother or some other relation of a chief, and he must of course have previously distinguished himself by courage and other warlike qualities.

T [492]

Photo W. Hansson.
Young Toba Indian mounted on muleback. Argentine Chaco.

T 411 177

The war weapons of the Tobas were formerly the bow and arrow and the club, made of hard *palo santo* wood. The latter, we are told, were as heavy as if they had been made of iron. But the Tobas early learnt to know the European horse and used horses in their wars also. According to Campos, the Tobas who fought on horseback did not use bow and arrows but long lances [2]). Lances of this kind are still used for hunting the wild boar. The Toba warriors also used armour of tiger-skin and had the head adorned with plumes. Body-painting, moreover, formed an important

T 714 302

[2]) Campos, *op. cit.* p. 230.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

/319/

Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 179 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171] M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make <u>chicha</u> because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

C M 175 Mocobies, and the Palomos, which are almost at an end, all have the same customs, and are similar in every way, which is the reason for our lumping them together in order to speak of them as a whole, without differentiating between one and another. All are Caribs, eaters of human flesh, abominable in the extreme, untrustworthy and much given to warring, which flares up amongst them easily. They sometimes fight against the Guaycurús, and do so continuously against the Spanish although in their attacks upon the Spaniards they are more like thieves than soldiers for they never face them but rather attack by surprise and by ambush, making very sure before doing so of the enemy strength by C M 175 726 means of spies. These latter are tireless in their spying and will keep watch upon the Spanish positions for a year or two or three, observing everything very carefully under cover of darkness, to see whether they will meet with resistance or not, and until they are absolutely sure of their superiority, they bide their time; so when they do attack one can be sure that the result can be but one, and that there is no danger in it for them. These spies creep about at night on all fours, so that their elbows are covered with callouses, and they never attack, since they are alone, and if they are heard they scurry away with great ease, and some with the help of magic take the shape of some tame animal in order to go about their spyings more easily. Although they will not openly face the Spanish, they will, when escape is impossible, fight valorously, and sell their lives dearly, as can be seen every day and as was experienced five years ago by an officer commanding the regiment of the city of Santiago del Estero who, coming upon five Mocovíes in the forest, surrounded them with his men, but they resisted bravely, wounding many Spaniards before dying, and the last who remained alone with his wife, continued to keep up the battle, his wife supplying him with arms, and would not give himself up until he was riddled with bullets, having first wounded many Spaniards with his arrows, the C M 175 411 commanding officer almost mortally. The weapons which they all use [575] are arrows, clubs and darts, which they fashion expertly from a certain hard wood. Their darts are very long, about 15 hand breadths, and very heavy, but they use them with great dexterity and agility. The head is made from the antlers of deer, and is not firmly embedded in the shaft but rather is loose and has a small cord tied to it so that when the dart is jabbed into the body of an enemy and the shaft quickly snatched out, the point remains in the wound and the enemy kept from escaping by means of the cord, for the lance head cannot be pulled

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Young Toba Indian mounted on muleback. Argentine Chaco.

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T 714 302

[2]) Campos, *op. cit.* p. 230.

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many
women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when
her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover
that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for
[578] there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
[831] rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere
without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the
members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques*
are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened
bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to
make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party
did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

The Functions of the Chief

622 The ex-chief of the San Andrés region, on the Pilcomayo river, was the famous Cuchitoro, who received three leagues of land along the river from the government of Argentina. The present day chief of this region is called Santiago, and he was made chief by the white colonizers who hoped to win him to their service. Nevertheless, Santiago remained loyal to his people.

The principal functions of the chief, according to their [648] description to me at San Andrés, consist nowadays in representing his tribe before the whites and in patching up, amicably, any conflicts 622 arising between groups of Indians in his territory. If a murder is com- 627 mitted in one group it is the chief's duty to require the killer's family 682 to pay the blood price. The amount of such compensation depends upon the social status of the victim. If it is a matter of an old and inactive man the loss is considered of little importance and a couple of goats and an old rifle are sufficient to re-establish friendly relations between the victim's and the murderer's groups. In other cases the injured party demands a horse, three goats, a rifle, etc. If the blood price is put too high the chief in charge of the matter may seek out the head of the dead man's family and ask him to lower the price. [14]

682 In former times the law of an eye for an eye was meticulously carried out. The Indians of San Andrés had killed a man from a neighboring village whose inhabitants then emigrated to the Bermejo river. Fifteen years later a nephew of the dead man made the entire trip from the Bemejo to the Pilcomayo to square matters with the murderers and killed, in his turn, one of the Indians of the village. He then returned to the Bermejo without being pursued.

726 The last Indian war took place in the San Andrés region in 1928. The people of the village of San Martin attacked San Andrés, under cover of darkness. Firing continued until daylight, but--as often happens in these battles--no one was killed or wounded. Some time later the people of Yuto joined with the inhabitants of San Andrés to attack the San Martin Indians. They passed by the Mission composed and dressed for war, painted and adorned with feathers. Before the attack they executed a war dance in the bed of the Pilcomayo river,

726 which was dry at the time. Then, moving along the left bank, they came upon the people of San Martín from the rear, cutting off their retreat. A large number of the latter, mostly women and children [127] were killed or wounded. The Yuto people carried off a child with them as a prisoner.

Divers Religious Beliefs

776 158 Among the spirits the most to be feared are the wilan who possess their victims and sink them into a state of furious madness. Thus, in the San Patricio mission a young girl all at once became pale, her eyes starting from their sockets. She fled, bolting into the wooded area, where she remained for four days. Those who followed her said that her tracks disappeared as suddenly as if the girl had flown through the air.

Another girl got up from a fainting spell during which she had been under the care of four witch doctors and said that a spirit had entered her.

Here is a case which took place in San Andrés a short time before my arrival. A Mataco had gone off to some distance from the village in search of a horse. On the way back he imagined that he saw against [15] a tree, a small luminous being, about the size of a cooking pot, which leaped from tree to tree and finally disappeared in the underbrush. Frightened, our Indian fled to the village where he fell in a faint and was shaken by violent convulsions. Doctor C. Smith had to give him a morphine injection to quiet him. The Indian got better and a few days later felt well enough to go out into the surrounding area. On the way back he had the same experience and suffered like aberrations. His parents, shaking with fright, went to get the doctor so that he might give him an injection. According to Dr. C. Smith, such hallucinations may be the result of kidney trouble, which causes the diseased person to have optical illusions, especially the apparition of luminous spots before the eyes. Certain strange and sinister sounds, also, which the Mataco Indians attribute to spirits [82] are really made by nocturnal birds. And a meteor, which fell into the Pilcomayo during my stay there was explained to me by the Matacos as the fall of an old man with gray hair.

C M 175 411 [111] from the body without making the wound much longer because a barb is carved into it and this impedes its being drawn out. If they have time they invariably decapitate those of their enemies whom they wound in battle, and they do this with great dexterity as they find the joint between the vertebrae in a moment and sever the head with one slash of their knives made from the jawbone of the "palometa" [a vicious type of fish which also goes by the name of "piraña"--Translator]. After the head has been severed the scalp is removed and then stretched and dried, and kept in order to celebrate their more important fiestas and to demonstrate their bravery.

C M 175 492 "They used, in the old days, to go about on foot, but they have since become great horsemen having stolen large numbers of horses from the ranches and towns of the Spaniards. From the city of Santa Fé alone and in the space of only 20 years they have made off with some 15,000 horses. That is why they are such good riders today, surpassing the Spaniards. Running after a fleeing horse and using only their lances to help them off the ground they will leap upon it and mount either from the side or from behind. They do not use stirrups and their saddles are very meager affairs, so much so that they often ride saddleless, but so swiftly that only rarely can the Spanish overtake them for they make their horses fly by whipping them with a three tailed lash which they always carry with them. When on the warpath they are happy with but skimpy rations which each carries for himself, and they make fun of the many preparations which the Spaniards make since they, with a small amount of half-grilled meat and whatever they can glean from the countryside in the way of fruit or other things undertake treks of a hundred leagues to wage war, their bed being the hard ground or at most a stiff cowhide. But this is nothing unusual for them since their beds are hardly of better stuff when they are at home.

C M 175 513 554 "These latter are made of straw which is spread all over the floor of their habitation which, although low-ceilinged, is very long in order to allow room for the whole family group to stretch out, each family having its own fire in the center. The oldest lies down [576] at the head in the place of greatest prestige and then, on either side, his sons according to age, followed by the grandchildren and other descendents, each with their families in such a manner that the way in which they lie down to sleep is a living representation of the family tree. They have no covering other than the branches and grasses with which they thatch their hovels, and in which a fire burns continually. The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 727 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

although they retain their position of ministers of "foreign affairs," representing the tribe before outsiders either to treat some matter, or to form an alliance for either war or peace. And even then their leadership is not of much value for the members of the tribe, the populace, are free to refuse to go to war -- although actually their pride only rarely allows them to hold back. 701

When a chief plans an attack he gets the advice of the old men of the tribe and of other influential persons, and if these do not set their approval upon his plan he nevertheless invites those who will to follow him. 721

Sometimes, though, large scale invasions are planned by the allied chiefs of several villages. When we arrived at the village of Chaguaral, we found there a group of eleven or thirteen chiefs, all Matacos, who were awaiting the arrival of [194] their allies with whom, shortly thereafter, they invaded the territory of other Matacos who three months earlier had given them a good drubbing.

While they are on their way to wage war they vociferate wildly, shouting both threateningly and happily. They dye part of their faces and bodies black and sometimes muss up their already unkempt hair until they look like "lost souls," in the opinion of a Christian Indian. On the eve of battle, those who have the wherewithal deck their hair, waist and ankles with feathers, preferring red or yellow ones, and tie any rag they may have with them tightly about their midriffs. When combat begins they break out with the most bloodcurdling yells. 726 [302]

This business of putting on warpaint is common to almost all savages: it was the custom also among those whom the Romans called barbarians; for example, according to Claudius the Sigambrians used to dye their hair a brilliant red before going into battle. 000

The chiefs have the place of honour in the thickest of the battle, which always results in the death of some of them. If the invaders win, they sack everything, capture the women, the children and cattle, parcel out the booty and set fire to the village. 726 621 727

They give no quarter to the warriors and only rarely do they spare the lives of the older women because they distrust them as 727

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spies or as bad teachers for the children they are carrying off. The very old women are scorned as worthless. But the boys under ten or twelve are taken off and brought up as warriors and husbands for the strengthening of the tribe.

This custom ought not to appear more barbarous than that 680 which the Scythians, who lived between the Don and the Danube, used to practice, which was to cut the throats of all prisoners in order to avoid the trouble of guarding them while they lived out their nomadic lives. And what can we possibly say about this when the Romans, already Christian, hurled their prisoners into the circus, there to be killed by wild beasts and jeered at by the masses?

I make these comparisons merely by way of asserting that human beings are the same in all places and have been so in all periods of history.

With these harsh measures the danger and shame of slavery 727 is avoided, a thing which would anyway be incompatible with the nomadic life they lead, with their perpetual wars, even with the scarceness of food and finally with the independent character of the Indian himself who would prefer to kill or be killed rather than to be a slave. Nevertheless let the extraordinary influence be considered which such practices may have upon the existence and distribution of the tribes, for a series of victories gained by one tribe or by an alliance of tribes can bring about the complete destruction or disappearance of others.

[195] He who kills an enemy, if he has time to hack it off, carries away his scalp, together with hair, ears and even a strip of skin from the back part of the neck. This scalp is molded into the shape of a cup with the aid of a reed or flexible twig which is put in place and sewn around the edges. Right away, still dripping blood, it is filled with liquor and, grasped by the hair, is drained and passed around so that all may drink from it in honor of the victor and mockery of the vanquished. After having made several rounds in this way, the "cup" is grasped by the rim, liquor is poured over the hair until it comes streaming down and those present allow it to trickle off into their gaping mouths just for the fun of it.

I had, in my possession, one of these scalps which had belonged to a Toba chief who was killed by a Mataco friend when

that invasion took place which we had seen in preparation in the village of Chaguaral. Unfortunately moths got into it and ruined it, and I had no other recourse but to throw it out since it was no longer worth sending to Italy together with some skulls and other objects I had collected. 727

This custom of scalp taking is common to all the Indians hereabouts, and is also indulged in by those living in North America. The strange thing is that it was also practiced by the Scythians.

The Germans also were in the habit of drinking from the skulls of their fallen enemies. Who does not know about Albuin the Longobard who made his wife Rosamund drink from her father's skull some 1300 years ago? [191]

This Indian practice reminds me of something which, in my opinion, reflects the sagacity of these savages:

I was with the colonel of the regiment which was on duty on the frontier, on one of his periodic visits. Near a fort where an Indian tribe was camped the son of the general chief came to see him, (the chief himself did not make an appearance since he wished the colonel to call on him first) and made us a present of some very good and delicious aloja. As it happened that he had just returned from a raid upon the Tobas we asked him if he had not brought back a few scalps. The Indian, as though seeking an excuse for his cruelty said: "The Tobas take the scalps of white men and we take the scalps of the Tobas."

On this same occasion, seeing me dressed in the manner of country people, surrounded by army officers and standing beside the colonel who treated me with great consideration and respect, the Indians whispered among themselves: "Who do you suppose this one is?" And the more sophisticated answered "he must be some president or other!"

It seemed to me as I heard this idle chatter and banter that I was in the midst of a thickly crowded mass of our own lower classes.

[196] One of the superstitions among these Indians is to sally forth on their raiding expeditions with the new moon. They appear to attribute some magical virtue to it, yet they do not 721 821

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

they are killing our companions. Do not flee, face the enemy even if he stamps on your feet." 727

Second Indian -- "Oh, how I would have liked to be there! The trouble was that I did not see you when you were leaving..."

First Indian -- "You should have seen it! We just sailed into them with lance and club and in a short time had killed a multitude. Oh, we were really avenged there!

"Now I am truly happy: we are even. We scalped one of them, cut the hands off another, tore the heart out of a third, cut the...of another and decapitated many..."

And so he went on making a detailed description of all the acts of prowess performed.

I think that they must attribute some special virtue to the enemies' members. I remember that on one occasion I had in my possession three Mataco skulls picked up at a place where four years previously some forth of them who had been taken prisoners had been killed. The floods had carried off all the skulls except the three I was able to salvage.

I took these skulls with me to my hut which was at a distance of about ten leagues, on the frontier, and put them in my room under a small table which served as my desk.

One stormy night I heard a noise near the door which was open. The puny light given off by the tallow candle only made it more difficult to see and I could not make out the outlines of a black object which was moving about in the darkness of the room. "Who is it?" I shouted, reaching as one may well suppose under the circumstances for the revolver which was lying close by on the table. "Friend...friend...that's all...." and a Mataco chief came towards me with a companion. "What do you want friend?" I answered. "Toba etec" (the Tobas' head) he replied. I picked up one of the skulls and handed it to him, adding "Toba catchia" (bad Toba). The Indian grabbed the skull with his left hand, and as though possessed, started to claw at it and to stick his fingers into the eye-sockets and gaping mouth and then into his own mouth as though to suck them, all the while jumping about and shouting confusedly.

This chief had found out about the skulls but was under the impression that they were Toba, his mortal enemies, and had come

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during the night to celebrate the occasion.

It happened that the local Matacos returned about this time from the sugar harvest in the Salta plantations which were about seventy leagues from my camp, and it befell that every day, for some time, groups of Indians would station themselves at my door and ask me for a Toba head. I would let them have one, always repeating, as it were a refrain: "Toba catchia, catchia...." (bad, bad Toba), and they would go through the usual routine.

Chapter VIII

Religion

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The Chaco Indians have no God. I don't mean only that they do not conceive of God as a thinker or philosopher might but that they do not even conceive of one as do even untutored whites or Chinese.

[198] It is affirmed that the Pampas Indians do have a God, but this report must be considered as a recent importation and due to the continual contact of the Pampas with whites and with their brothers from over the mountains who were converted to Christianity shortly after the conquest.

But if the inhabitants of the Chaco do not know anything about God they nonetheless have their form of worship: the cult of spirits and of the stars.

I believe that there can be no doubt that the Chaco Indians are, generally speaking, as primitive as any of the world's other Indians and savages.

Now some philosopher-historians assure us that man's first religious stage is that of fetichism, which means the worship of fetiches, a word with which the Negroes of Africa signify the brute objects of their adoration.

Without denying that this may be or may have been the case where the Africans are concerned I nevertheless believe, at least regarding our Indians here, that the first stage in religion is not fetichism but spiritism of a sort which will later be described.

The opposite could well be demonstrated but in order not to stray from these my Indians, let me say that I have seen proof positive of conjugal love among polygamists.

We had on board an Indian with his young and beautiful partner, whom he loved and adored as though she were a representation of the Virgin.

In that business of the Indian who was bitten by a snake and whom we treated, his wife came to him immediately and cared for him for twenty days without ever leaving his side.

Chief Pascual, whose wife was captured and carried off in a surprise raid -- she being old and ugly --, organized an invasion, tracked down the attackers, fought like a lion and rescued his partner from the hands of the enemy. These are facts which happened in a short time while I was present in that area.

When an Indian puts in an appearance and asks for something, he never forgets his children, his wife or his relatives: when he receives anything capable of being divided up, he distributes it, not only to the above but also to his companions.

I have also noticed that mothers are always extraordinarily loving with their children; and have noted that the inter-tribal wars and the mass killings of the inhabitants of a given village are always motivated by the need to avenge offences offered against compatriots or relatives. And if this does not reflect loving concern, what does?

[218] They are cruel, but only regarding prisoners of war whom they condemn to death. We are hardly in a condition to judge them for this cruelty since we did ourselves do the very same until recently; put it into wholesale practice against the Indians themselves during the period of conquest, and continue to do so against them even now when we can do it with impunity.

Among the Indians this custom of killing prisoners is necessary for their personal security in the nomadic life they lead in which they are continually exposed to surprise attacks, and it furthermore frees them from the shame of slavery, an unknown phenomenon amongst them. (1) Looked at from another point

1. This does not agree with what is recounted about the Mbayas and other tribes, who, as report has it, have slaves. (Ed.)

Even had this difficulty not existed, the social organization 231
of the American nomads made the keeping of domesticated animals well nigh impossible. In [220] effect, and in spite of the fact that one nation might occupy an immense area, yet it would be divided into small tribes who owned sway over relatively small territories and were (as their survivors still are) continually at war amongst themselves. It follows from this that there was no security, which is an indispensable condition for the raising of animals and for any other peaceful occupation. Even at the present time the Chaco Indians, although they are acquainted with our domestic animals and do on occasion try to raise them, do not do so on a worthwhile scale because the mere fact of their possessing them is a temptation for their neighbors to invade and despoil them. If social life had somehow got to the point of compelling these Indians to gather into large groupings, then, given the range of their vast territories and despite their being nomadic and continually at war, it would always have been easy for them to protect their animals, when invaded, by fencing them into inclosures.

Can the Indians of these parts have been cannibals? This is 266
a question which always arises when we have dealings with savages like these.

In America cannibalism has had adherents among "Hebrews and Samaritans," among "Barbarians and Christians." The savage Caribs and the cultured Mexicans topped off the very best dishes of their cuisine with human flesh. The peaceful Peruvians used not to disdain stews of human blood for their religious feast days, in which they would knead corn bread with the blood taken from the foreheads of babes -- what pious butchers were the gentle and beautiful women devotees of that nation's religion.

In this region of the Chaco, although cannibalism may have been practiced, temporibus illis, (which cannot be proved), at the present time it is either non-existent or else must be considered reduced to its very lowest terms. 727

I shall say nothing about the custom of drinking aloja from 264
the scalp of a prisoner which has been converted into a propitiating cup of vengeance and victory.

I have seen them drink avidly of the blood of cattle 262
slaughtered for our use, but they do not feed exclusively on cattle 272

Just to clarify this I shall cite a personal case which will be helpful to the reader in arriving at an opinion.

I was talking to a chief who was recounting his feats of prowess to me for the first time.

In answer to my question: "Where are you from?" he unexpectedly answered: Num-maitta-ntocq-Téúj-tocuéy, stretching and then drawing back his right arm as he pointed towards the North.

[256] I was very much surprised and said, interrupting him: Ntde-ʾhije? -- "Where?" -- I had understood him to say that he wanted to tell me about a town on the Teuco River, called Umaitá like that town in Paraguay near the mouth of the Bermejo, and my curiosity became excited to a great pitch with the idea that I was about to make an ethnographic discovery of importance.

What he had actually tried to say to me was this: "I-(nu) killed many far away on the Teuco."

Nu ilon ntócq (I have killed many)...; and right away he commenced to count in Mataco from one to four, enclosing his right hand in his left and opening his fingers one by one, all except his thumb. But when he got to four he was at a loss how to go on, yet as he was squatting, he began to make vertical lines in the earth with his finger saying Toj each time he did so, which means "this one," and every now and then he would raise his head and his hand with his thumb concealed by his four fingers and say, looking at me: Uitd toj which means "and this also," and thus he continued about twenty times, always being careful to drive home to me that in addition to the lines he was making on the ground I must remember the original four which he had counted on his hand. At last he put an end to his counting by saying ntocq ntocq which is "many, many."

And this was very true. This chief had been at one time the scourge of the frontier whites and the whip of his Indian enemies until finally, old and much battered by the whites, he left off warring, gained a government pension and settled down with all his followers -- very much reduced in numbers -- near Fort Gorriti, on the left bank of the Bermejo River. It happened that near Fort Aguirre, on the right bank of the Teuco, some 50 kilometers northeast of Gorriti, another band of Indians had attempted an invasion but were themselves the object of a surprise attack in their village, part of their number being killed and others imprisoned.

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These latter, bound and with their hands tied behind their backs, elbow to elbow and forming a chain of some 30 or 40 individuals, were handed over to the chief so that he might put them to death. He did most of the killing himself with a spear. While the massacre was in progress most of the victims remained silent, while others kept up a continual murmuring such as is done in their religious ceremonies. These were, without a doubt, witchdoctors.

I passed through the place of this tragedy five years after the event and could see no sign of human bones belonging to the victims' unburied corpses. The flood waters had carried them off and the winds had covered all remains. Only after much searching and with the help of a soldier who had witnessed the event was I able to find three skulls by digging among some bushes. The national government tried to punish the officer in charge of Fort Aguirre and it [257] is possible that this was done. However, one must accept the fact that there is no possible compatibility between civilized and savage elements; and all individual philanthropy, all a priori reasoning made far from the scene, lose their practical validity in this theater of fighting brought about by the head-on collision of the two races. Each one thinks that the destruction of the enemy is the easiest and also the most natural expedient in the world. Therefore the final extermination of the Redskins at the hands of the whites is inevitable, by means of cold steel, fire, expatriation and mass dispersion as though they were beasts.

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Coming back to the matter of numerals, one must never be led to suppose that these Indians are not aware that 10 fish are half of 20 fish. A dog, when he rushes upon a second bone thrown to him and growls because some other dog tries to get the first bone, is also responding to the same perceptual stimulus. Nevertheless the fact of not possessing an adequate word for expressing this recognition reveals, in my opinion, a lack of abstraction. The form of a language and the very manner in which words evolve from their original sounds owe much to the state of maturity of the speakers' capability for mental abstraction.

Regarding the Mataco words used to indicate the first four numbers, I must say that their great length and the gesticulations which went with them surprised me very much. It seemed to me that each one of these expressions, if it was to justify its accompanying

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

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first place, of course, of the chiefs. The children are adopted as members of the tribe, and they readily amalgamate with it, the more so as the captives are generally well treated and admitted to equal privileges with their conquerors.

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All Indian tribes of the Pilcomayo were formerly scalp-hunters and head-hunters, and some of them still practise this custom. The head of the slain enemy was cut off, the scalp stripped from the scull, and both were kept as a sort of trophy. Shortly before I arrived at the Pilcomayo in 1911, the *Ashluslay* had succeeded in killing nineteen Bolivian soldiers who were marching down to one of the military settlements on the river. The heads of the young men had been cut off and taken home by the Indians. Later on it was reported that their scalps or skulls, fixed on long poles, decorated the entrance of the main Indian village, being used at the great feasts as drinking-cups which were believed to inspire the drinkers with courage. For my own part I have not been able to gather more particulars about these head-hunting practices of the Chaco Indians, nor has any other traveller given information on this point. On the war customs observed by the Argentine Mataco-Vejos, the Italian traveller Pelleschi makes the following statement: »Whosoever kills an enemy wears as a trophy, if he has time to secure it, the scalp with the hair, the ears, and possibly a fold of skin from the back of the neck. He forms it to the shape of a cup by means of a bulrush or a flexible twig, which he binds and stitches all round the edge; then, while still bloody, he fills it with liquor, and holding it by the hair, passes it round to his companions, who empty it as they drink in honour of the victor and in scorn of the vanquished. Another way is to hold the scalp by the edge and pour out the liquor in drops over the hair and jaws.« [1])

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As to the *Tobas*, I have gathered that when they return home after a successful attack a great feast is held, when the spoils taken on the war expedition are brought forth in triumph, dances are performed, and algaroba beer is drunk to excess. Dancing forms an important part of the feast. The victory dance of the Tobas is *Nomi* which is performed by the younger warriors during the day. A special dance is performed round the scalps, hung on high poles in the middle of the village, and beer is drunk from the skulls, but I have no more details about these ceremonies. Nordenskiöld, who during his travels in the Chaco came across a scalp taken by the *Mataco* in one of their wars, mentions in passing that

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[1]) Pelleschi, *Eight Months on the Gran Chaco*, p. 80.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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»before the Indians parted with their trophy they demanded that their old women should be allowed to sing and dance with it». It is a pity that Nordenskiöld, dominated by his exclusive interest to obtain a rare Indian »curiosity», did not avail himself of the excellent opportunity to inquire as to the ideas which the Indians connected with this scalp-dance of the women. We must look for an explanation from other sources. In the account I have given of the war customs of the Jibaros I have shown that they are wholly founded on magical ideas. The hair and head of the slain enemy is regarded as the seat of his soul or spirit and therefore is full of mysterious power. In fact, through the dances and other ceremonies performed with the scalp or head, the trophy is turned into a fetish which will promote the luck of the victor in various respects. The fact that the women play the most important rôle at the scalp-feasts — which seems to be almost a general rule — is also due to special magical ideas. The most important of the beneficial effects ascribed to the trophy is that it promotes fertility and renders the domestic animals prolific. Since, according to the belief of uncivilized peoples, woman is, as it were, the symbol of fertility, not only in the human world, but also in the animal world and in nature, it is reasonable to assume that women perform the scalp-dance precisely to promote fertility by means of the lucky object. Such is the case for instance among the Jibaros, where the dance of »supplication» round the trophy is professedly resorted to with a view to making the harvest abundant and the domestic animals prolific. Evidently the Chaco Indians entertain similar ideas. Since the head or the scalp is full of spiritual power we can also easily understand that the Indians believe themselves to be »inspired with courage» by drinking from the trophy.

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Special honour is paid among the Tobas to chiefs who have carried a war to a successful end. The ordinary chiefs receive confirmation in their dignity by the Council of the Old Men, and the young temporary leader, elected for that particular war expedition, is made an ordinary chief in recognition of his merits.

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with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

726 which was dry at the time. Then, moving along the left bank, they came upon the people of San Martín from the rear, cutting off their retreat. A large number of the latter, mostly women and children [127] were killed or wounded. The Yuto people carried off a child with them as a prisoner.

Divers Religious Beliefs

776 158 Among the spirits the most to be feared are the wilan who possess their victims and sink them into a state of furious madness. Thus, in the San Patricio mission a young girl all at once became pale, her eyes starting from their sockets. She fled, bolting into the wooded area, where she remained for four days. Those who followed her said that her tracks disappeared as suddenly as if the girl had flown through the air.

Another girl got up from a fainting spell during which she had been under the care of four witch doctors and said that a spirit had entered her.

Here is a case which took place in San Andrés a short time before my arrival. A Mataco had gone off to some distance from the village in search of a horse. On the way back he imagined that he saw against [15] a tree, a small luminous being, about the size of a cooking pot, which leaped from tree to tree and finally disappeared in the underbrush. Frightened, our Indian fled to the village where he fell in a faint and was shaken by violent convulsions. Doctor C. Smith had to give him a morphine injection to quiet him. The Indian got better and a few days later felt well enough to go out into the surrounding area. On the way back he had the same experience and suffered like aberrations. His parents, shaking with fright, went to get the doctor so that he might give him an injection. According to Dr. C. Smith, such hallucinations may be the result of kidney trouble, which causes the diseased person to have optical illusions, especially the apparition of luminous spots before the eyes. Certain strange and sinister sounds, also, which the Mataco Indians attribute to spirits [821] are really made by nocturnal birds. And a meteor, which fell into the Pilcomayo during my stay there was explained to me by the Matacos as the fall of an old man with gray hair.

blood or on that of other animals as some have reported; rather 262
do they make their principal diet of fish, game, and the roots 272
and fruits of the field with which, together with wild forest honey
which is so abundant, they prepare the fermented beverages I
have already spoken about.

He who spends any time among the Indians finds cause to 732●
marvel at the lack of cripples or maimed people. From this fact
certain travelers have gone on to affirm that the Indians, like
latter day Spartans, kill off their malformed babies. This is also
the opinion of some historians.

[221] I, on the other hand, although confirming the fact
of their being no cripples by my own personal observation, ex-
plain the phenomenon by attributing it to the physical and social
condition in which the Indians live. A more than free life, gen-
erally sufficient food (in spite of what may be said to the con-
trary); the nakedness of the women -- that is, their lack of tight
garments about their waists and breasts; the healthful climate
(for them at least), all are physical elements conducive to the
great rarity of cases of deformity in the body structure of their
babies.

Furthermore, the constant state of war, the frequent sur-
prise attacks, the custom of giving no quarter, the wild beasts
and reptiles, all conspire against the handicapped who are
inferior in the indispensable faculties necessary in the struggle
for existence. In addition to this it is probable that malformed
children are not accorded the privilege granted their normal
peers, that is, that their lives be spared by victorious enemies,
and they be carried off to the latters' villages there to be raised
as members of the kidnapers' group and thus contribute to its
strength and progress.

All this then explains sufficiently the lack of deformed
individuals without the need to attribute to the Indians the habit
of killing newborn babies or allowing them to die. My personal
experience allows me to set down a positive happening which
gives the lie to such a supposition.

In the very center of the Chaco I came upon a deaf-mute
Indian who must have been a little over thirty years of age.
Really, if there is any defect which makes a man completely
useless and deserving of being eliminated from society, this is
it. However, it is true also that it is one of those imperfections

which even in the most favorable physical circumstances can occur quite often among children who are the offspring of parents who are too closely consanguineous. Marriages of this type (between close relatives) are not rare here, and -- this is not just an extra trip bearing grist for my mill -- I have been assured that of the very small number of defective persons these latter, the deaf-mute, are the least rare among the Indians of these parts; among whom, let it be said, I have not seen a single cretin or cotudo [coto is a malignant swelling of the throat -- Translator] and that in spite of the fact that aberrants of this type abound in the north and western part of the Republic.

To come back to my deaf-mute: The occasion of my meeting him was brought about by his having been attacked by a tiger [jaguar--Translator] which mauled him horribly while he was gathering firewood. (This is one further proof as to the difficulty of putting up a successful struggle for life in these waste places if one is not in the full possession of all one's senses). We were called to treat the poor wretch, but he refused our ministrations energetically, preferring to put himself in the hands of the witch doctors.

Despite what I have stated above, the Indians themselves have assured me that it sometimes [222] happens that a mother will allow her children to die if their father or any other man who will care for them dies or goes away.

However, this must happen only very seldom (and does not weaken our argument regarding the handicapped) for among the inhabitants of a given village and particularly between relatives there exists a truly charming sharing of goods -- yet when food is scarce one may suppose that the phenomenon is more common. But such a state of food scarcity is probably felt less owing to the great variety of foods acceptable to the Indians and their really remarkable adaptability to the availability of food: they can live on a very skimpy diet when need arises, and then gorge themselves with a vengeance when they hit a time of plenty.

The elasticity of the stomachs of these savages is truly extraordinary. When not on the march a mouthful of food is enough for them: while fresh air, the exertions of the hunt, of fishing, of harvesting and of traveling in pursuit of these activities

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

159 naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it
762 and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch
[766] the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered.
[136] According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

[578] *Third case.* A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was dis-
[797] covered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual
[881] frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered
[586] girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His
[578] first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who
[797] warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112
Choroti SK6

M 304 inflammation in the face the girl has to fast for some days after the operation.

M 304 751 Tattooing has a purely magical significance, as may be inferred from the fact that the Mataco and the Choroti women regard it particularly as a protection against disease. Analyzing the custom, we can distinguish at least three factors in it, all of which are associated with magical ideas: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes) rubbed into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised which remain when the wounds have healed. Bleeding and scarification are common practices of purely magical significance among all Indians of South America, and as far as the Pilcomayo tribes are concerned I shall have occasion to mention this custom again in a later chapter. The very scars left after such operations are regarded as a protection against evil spirits. Further, that tattooing is done by means of ashes or soot is certainly not an accident. The use of ashes for superstitious purposes is of frequent occurrence among the Indians, the general idea being that ashes are a prophylactic against evil spirits. The custom of mixing ashes or soot with saliva is significant from the same point of view, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed to the saliva.

M [789]

M [827]

C 304 751 789 All women among the Choroti are tattooed in the same way, that is, have the same marks and patterns applied to the face, and no full-grown woman lacks this tribal characteristic. Since tattooing is regarded as a permanent protection against evil spirits and sickness, it is natural that a woman lacking it should be shunned by the men, but it is not a means of attraction or a »decoration» in the common sense of the word.

T 304 184 [362] As to the *T o b a s*, tattooing or the custom of making indelible marks on the body or the face was formerly in vogue among all Toba tribes as among all peoples of the Guaycurú-group; but the Bolivian Tobas of the present-day have dropped this custom, contenting themselves with simple body painting. Tattooing among the Tobas seems to have been limited to the female sex, as indeed is the rule among the Chaco tribes. According to d'Orbigny, the Toba girls were tattooed when they attained puberty and became marriageable. Since the custom is no longer practised by the Bolivian Tobas I have not seen how it is done by them. The procedure, however, is the same as among other Chaco tribes, incisions being made in the face and ashes rubbed into the wounds. As appears from the photographs of some Toba women which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche took in Buenos Aires in 1899 the tattooing practised by the Toba women was exceedingly elaborate and complicated.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 783 827 [224] resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arms fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the idea of the Choroti, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood; and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The same custom is practised by other tribes of the Pilcomayo. Thus C 171 Nordenskiöld noticed it among the Ashluslay, although he did not understand its real meaning. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition, he says, the Indians may be seen to pierce their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes. In both cases the idea evidently is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body and perhaps killed with the pointed instrument.

M 304 783 The scars left by the cuts are tended with care and shown with satisfaction, indeed with pride. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which the *palometa* fishes had inflicted on their body with their sharp teeth when they were bathing in the river. It is clear that according to the idea of the Indians not only the bleeding purges the body from impure matter and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous in regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with European civilization, namely, vaccination. I could myself appreciate the extraordinary importance ascribed to scars when during my stay at Esperanza I vaccinated M 751 783 304 a number of Chaco Indians who were employed as labourers at the sugar factory. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this one, and they therefore as a rule submitted to the vaccine inoculation without remonstration, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remained were regarded with wonder and admiration, and it was perfectly understood that they were a sort of warranty that the terrible disease would not attack the person wearing them.

M 302 189 Of all personal ornaments *body-painting* is the most important. All Chaco tribes practise it, and men and women alike. In the Chaco, as in other parts of South America, body-painting is essentially a custom of magical significance, as one can easily find out by considering the circumstances under which it is practised. The favourite colour of the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

Among the *Mataco*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruhák*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *oráittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *áittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katinák*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets,[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich, *Los comarcas virgenes*, p. 231.

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Choroti SK6

The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti. Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsel*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious.

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Matáco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not »ornaments« in the civilized sense of the word.

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures

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serve to pay the medicine-man in case something happens to them. 753 774

The ceremonial objects whose spirit the disease takes away do not become any weaker, since they may be used directly afterwards.

Even though the disease has been given food, he remains insatiable and wants more. He also wants to take away the things he is offered, that is the reason why the medicine-man is obliged to blow on the objects lest the disease should stick to them. When the disease does not get what he wants, he becomes angry and kills his victim.

The disease, or a bad spirit, introduces into the body of the sick person small sticks, usually objects which will make him feel pain. The medicine-man has to take them away by sucking the aching parts and he blows the patient to get the sicknes out of his body. Before treating a patient a medicine-man adorns himself with feathers in order to look like disease or the demon who caused it. The diseases and the spirits are very fond of these ornaments and enjoy seeing them on those who cure the patient. 753 755

When the malady is not very serious, the patient is treated within his hut for economical reasons. To determine whether or not the patient is to be decorated depends upon the seriousness of his case. The medicine-man and the patient get under the same blanket and the former speaks to the disease. Thus the audience is not too large and the disease is easier to cope with. Sometimes it is satisfied with a quart of alcohol. A sick child is always cured inside the house, except when there is an organized ceremony through which they can profit toward the end. 755

According to the Indians vaccine exerts a powerful action against the disease and he can no longer attack the individuals thus vaccinated. Shots fired at the end of the ceremony puts the disease to flight and prevents him from desiring the gun with which one assistant danced. To keep away sickness it is good to hang the carapace of a *tatu* 751

751 *careta* (big armadillo) or the skin of an alligator in the house. The disease will think that the animals are there and will not go into the house.

a) *The Treatment of Disease*

755 I attended a ceremony for the treatment of disease. The ceremony took place in front of some huts, the space was closed in by awnings and cloth. Inside the enclosure were the patient, the medicine-man and a certain number of individuals who assisted the latter. The patient, an old man, was sitting in the center of the space, his body carefully covered with cloth. The medicine-man stood near him and while murmuring incantations blew on the patient's body through his half clenched hand, beginning with his back, then the shoulders, the face and so on. In the meantime four or five men were dancing without interruption and made all the noise they could with a belt of big bells. They had tied to their feet anklets of deer hoofs and wore around their waists belts of ostrich feathers and on their heads were diadems. One of them held in his hand a bunch of ostrich feathers.

755 535 292

755 535 Their dance consisted of a cadenced and half-jumping walk with slightly bent knees. Some dancers went forward or backward while others stayed in the same spot. During the ceremony the medicine-man received the help of another old man who was also squatting at the patient's side. He began muttering incantations and blowing on the sick man as hard as he could. After one hour of this utterly exhausting exercise, the medicine-man went to a pot full of rice which was carefully concealed by a sheet near the patient. He crouched under the sheet and recited in a supplicative voice a long incantation over the food. Afterwards he blew on the rice with all his strength. He then offered goodly portions of it to all who had taken part in the ceremony. Then the medicine-man went to two *caraguatá* bags full of dresses. He covered them with a cloth under which he crouched. He

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I, who used to stay up very late, both to do my stint at guard duty and to take advantage of a few uninterrupted hours for study, used to take up a stand close to them. At first my presence there made them keep quiet, but later on, taking heart at my reiterated hiss tzilataj ("very pretty"), and seeing that I did not make fun of them, they continued in spite of my being there.

At last, after twenty days, the sick man got well.

One of the very strange treatments is the one which they ad- 752
minister to those who have been poisoned by a sting ray, which fish can administer an extremely painful and sometimes mortal wound. This treatment consists in placing the offended part, which is usually the ankle, over the smoke given off from the cracks in burning palo santo [lignum vital --Translator], which is a resinous wood, after which a woman in her menstruating period is to sit astride it. I have been assured by whites who have made the experiment that it is a very efficacious remedy.

Every treatment for sickness or wounds however needs, if it 756
is to have any virtue, to be in the hands of a witch doctor (male), or at least in those of a female witch doctor.

Not everyone can be a witch doctor, and just as the members of this profession make their patients pay according to the seriousness of the malady and the means of the individual, either in skins, animals, food or other things, so also does this profession have its seamy side in which quarrels and deception occur. In addition to this and in order to get greater prestige they shroud themselves in mystery and the supernatural. So it is that in the village of Granadero the Indians, speaking about a young man who was already embarked on this career, said that as a boy he had vanished and then reappeared after two years which he had spent underground among the a'hot, these a'hot having carried him off in order to instruct him in the art and imbue him with the virtues of doctor and priest.

While on the subject of these frauds I must tell of an occasion when things almost took a bad turn for me. I went to call on 123
Chief Granadero who was just recovering from a long illness. I 755
had with me, as is my custom, a pocket inkwell and a pen. Granadero noticed these things and asked me what they were. I, thinking to please him flourished the inkwell and pen and set about writing, but saw in a moment that Granadero had become furious and menacing -- his doctors had just cured him of the a'hot which

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776 The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared
761 because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

753 Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance,
776 the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút telàh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is
[755] possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyá*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamsa* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mata-
[752] co for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by
776 a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural
821 phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

IX. Storms

821 761 When a storm approaches with rain and thunder, little children's ears are to be covered each time the thunder crashes, otherwise Rain would take them under his arm and carry them away to his house. When such a thing happens, the child's body, which has remained on earth, becomes lean and white and all the food he takes is of no use. He visibly pines away, and it is not likely that a medicine-man can cure him. He will finally die without the cause of his death being known. The rain cannot do anything to grown-ups or big children, for it has not the strength to carry them away, [841] but it can harm menstruating women who happen to be out during a storm. Then they get very feeble.

X. Shooting Stars

821 781 Shooting stars foretell the death of someone. Meteors are stones thrown by the rain in order to fell the *quebracho*.

XI. Treatment of Snake Bites

752 825 When a serpent bites a man, it goes into the wound and climbs up in his body. When a man's foot is bitten by a snake the leg must be pressed starting from the thigh, squeezing down to the place where he has been bitten. In so doing, the snake which has already had time to enter the leg, is obliged to go down into the big toe where it rolls itself up, tired. The operation lasts from evening to dawn and when the sun appears the snake gets cramped and vanishes under the ground. Once the snake is out the medicine-man has to suck the wound, for the departing snake has left its skin inside the body of the victim. The patient is completely cured only when the last piece of skin left by the snake has been removed. Otherwise he remains sick, has a headache and gets thinner and thinner.

If the progress of the snake inside the body cannot be stopped, the animal may go up into the head and blind the victim. It also goes to the heart and after repeated bites

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may kill him. The snake's *āhat* is called *punsoya* (perhaps Spanish-ponzoña : poison).

When a man is bitten by a snake he must kill the reptile and take it home in order to be cured rapidly. If he has been bitten while away from his home, he must dig a groove and put the snake into it, facing it in the opposite direction to that which he is taking. Thus the snake cannot enter him.

Tawkwax taught the men the procedure to be followed in order to cure snake bites.

XII. How to Become a Singer

Those who want to become good singers must go to the bush and stay there for quite a long time. They must kill birds who are good singers and eat them after they have been made into powder and mixed with blood extracted from the arm. When they are in the bush they must first beat a drum, then run. Thus they will perhaps dream about a singing bird. When they wake up they must then take their drums and sing the song they heard in their dreams. One must not awaken until the song is finished or he will not remember it. Everyone has two songs and he must sing them every day in order to learn them. Ordinarily several young men go to the bush and after they have dreamed of a song they sing one after another. Generally three or four days are sufficient to master a song.

One must not sing someone else's song. If after one has eaten a bird he dreams of an iguana, it is no longer worth while to go on, for he will never become a good singer. The birds one dreams about and who teach one how to sing are not ordinary birds, they are *paata* (supernatural beings). The women do not know how to sing but they can cry when they have to mourn. Not all women know how to weep. In order to weep well, a woman must dream about another woman who is a good mourner. There are some exceptional women who can sing.

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of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *ãxọ̀tĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

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inch; there the punctures are to be made until the blood flows. If a first treatment proves insufficient it must be repeated until loss of blood relieves congestion and eases the limb.

To stop a hemorrhage one must burn an old hat or some old rag and put the ashes on the wound. When one is pricked by a thorn one must suck the blood to prevent inflammation.

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843 from a certain tuber which has been roasted and then ground in a mortar. The husband unties his belt and undoes the knot in his tie so that the umbilical cord not wrap itself about the child's neck.

844 Only on rare occasions are there any complications at birth. According to the observations of a medical missionary, Doctor Collins Smith, labor lasts about two [sic] hours for the first child and around four or five hours for the others. A delivery often gathers a numerous crowd, and the neighbors take up positions close to the woman who is in labor, without showing any particular interest, but ready to take part should it be necessary to render any assistance. Old women, greatly experienced, come to assist the woman in labor, especially if the delivery is a difficult one. These benevolent matrons
431 usually receive a gift--a goat or a piece of cloth--by way of payment for their trouble.

The pregnant woman who is about to deliver is placed on the thighs of one of these crones, who is seated cross-legged on the ground. She takes hold, with both hands, of a pole which is stuck vertically into the earth in front of her and grips it firmly as the pains become greater. Other informants have told me that women give birth to their babies in a squatting position directly onto the ground; but they confirmed the matter of the use of a rod or pole stuck into the earth. If the labor is difficult or longer than is usual, one of the matrons presses the body of the uterus with her hands as would a doctor wishing to expulse the plancenta mechanically. If the woman in labor is unable to keep her sitting position, she lies down in such a manner that one of the helpers may rest her knee against the perineum, while another woman massages her in the uterine region.

Any mishap which may occur in the process is [10] attributed to witchcraft or to the husband's negligence who may have violated one of the numerous "tabus" which he is obliged to observe.

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife. It is never cut before the appearance of the placenta, as a child's life is not complete until his placenta has been expelled. According to one of my informants
[752] the navel wound is cauterized with an incandescent pumpkin stalk. If the placenta is long in coming, the women exert upon the abdomen the same type of pressure used to accelerate the baby's birth. The placenta is buried without any kind of ceremony. The umbilical cord is dried and put into a little leather bag in the shape of a rhomboid, which the child carries about his neck until he is ten years old.

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new 791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance, 776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a 846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which ● [753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs.

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a'hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a'hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a'hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a'hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

C M 763 775 554 764 550

man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

M● C 755 753● [756]

In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

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Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

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had been tormenting him for so long, and had extracted from his 755
body several pens and a pencil, under guise of which, they said, the a'hot had been harming him.

[211] The women seem to be extraordinarily able as mid- 844
wives. 759

With singular ability they wait for the critical moment of labor and then, raising and holding the mother-to-be they shake her and keep uttering their customary exorcisms until they are successful in their endeavors.

However, if one wishes to be in on an interesting spectacle 755
one must see an invalid getting the full treatment in a village.

One evening while I was camped near a tribe I became curious on hearing a great sound of voices and the repercussion of strong blows on the ground. As my relations with these Indians was of the very best I did not hesitate to go to see what was afoot. In the midst of the village, in a sort of central square, I saw a circle of black figures illuminated fitfully by the blaze of the fires; they were the squaws and men who were sitting on their heels smoking in silence. In the center of the circle, in a space of about eight meters, four robust men with ostrich feathers and timbrels at their ankles, wrists, waists and on their heads were running back and forth, with their hands raised, gesticulating wildly and rattling some gourds half filled with seeds which added to the noise. They ran about singing and howling, and one could see that they were panting and covered with sweat. They would straighten out their legs and pound the ground with the whole sole of their feet, and as they did this they would raise their voices in a mad, desperate way, with their arms on high, heads to one side and body curved over.

Alternately two of them would stop, crouch, move their heads rapidly from right to left and up and down, howl and blow and spit on the backs, legs, heads and mouths of two invalids who were seated in their midst.

The two sick men were suffering terribly from the a'hots which had entered their bodies in the form of rheumatic pains, and the [753]
witch doctors were attempting to drive them out with their infernal dance. This, it was understood, they would be unable to do until they managed, by means of their unbridled racing about and thumping, to tire and intimidate the a'hots who, with evil intent

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776 761 The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

753 776 [755] Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance, the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút telâh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyé*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamai* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mataco for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

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his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyám*, by his *peyák nótta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyám* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aittáh is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aittáh is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aittáh talák*, *i.e.* »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aittáh talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aittáh talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

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Chapter XIV.

Religious rites and ceremonies.

As I have pointed out, magical conjurations play the most important part in the religious life of the Chaco Indians. These conjurations are of different kinds, according to the different occasions on which they take place, or the particular purposes for which they are performed. In some cases the Indians simply try to frighten the evil spirits away by shouting and making a noise with instruments of some kind; in other cases they try to render them harmless by coercing and compelling them. But the Indians also have recourse to magical conjurations with rattles, drums, dancing, etc. to influence good and beneficent spirits, for instance those animating certain trees and plants, or with a view to producing certain effects in nature or in the world of human beings merely on the principle of sympathetic magic. On the other hand, there is also a sort of worship, inasmuch as prayers are addressed to the individual guardian spirits in trouble and distress, and these prayers may, at least among the Tobas, be accompanied by offerings.

Those practices which may be referred to the category of »conjurations« apparently play the most important part. Being mostly performed by means of magical instruments of some kind, they are at any rate the most conspicuous. Prayers to a great extent escape observation and are kept more secret than other religious ceremonies.

1. Magical ceremonies to cure sickness.

We know already the general theory of disease held by the Chaco Indians. Most bodily evils from which the Indians suffer are, according to their belief, due to witchcraft, which implies that the illness has been sent by a human enemy, generally a malignant sorcerer. In this

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753 way the Indian has arrived at the theory of »possession»: an evil spirit has entered the body in the form of a material object of some kind. It is the medicine-man's business to extract the evil intruder, and if he succeeds in doing so, the patient will recover. An epidemic, on the other hand, especially such as has come to the Indians from another part of the country, is believed to be directly caused by special disease- and death-demons of a particularly malignant character, who wander about in the village carrying off one victim after the other. Against these demons even the art of the medicine-man is powerless. The only thing the panic-stricken Indians can do in such cases is to abandon the haunted village as soon as possible and wander off to another part of the country.

There is, to these Indians, practically no such thing as »natural» disease and death. Every illness is attributed to supernatural causes, be the diagnosis in a particular case witchcraft or disease.

Therefore, in dealing with native methods of curing illness we are here only concerned with such evils as are set down to witchcraft.

164 There are certain ailments which are particularly characteristic of
753 the Chaco Indians. Rheumatic pains, especially during the dry season, are very common, and both young and old people suffer from them. As we know, they usually come on very suddenly, and even civilized peoples still use expressions like »fairy-dart», »*Hexenschuss*», etc. of such sudden ailments. Beliefs of this kind are held both by the *Choroti*
753 and by the other Chaco Indians. The Indians have very concrete ideas as to the way in which the sorcerers and the demons who serve them operate. The mysterious pain suddenly afflicting a man is explained as due to an arrow shot by an evil spirit. The Choroti accordingly call this disease-demon *möhsek ihïtek*, i.e. »the arrow-shooting demon», and this is an idea which is quite common among the South American Indians in general. The expression seems to indicate that at least in some cases an evil spirit is supposed to operate alone. As a rule, however, he is sent by a human sorcerer. I have already mentioned that the »arrow» or »splinter», discharged by the sorcerer or his assistant demon, is generally a small stone, a cactus thorn, a piece of bone, or a small insect (for instance a worm or a beetle). I have also stated that this seemingly insignificant material object is identical with a mysterious demoniacal being whom the medicine-man, in curing the patient, tries to »extract» from his body. The object is sent by a *möhsek*, or in a certain sense *is* a *möhsek*. Generally, however, the Choroti call the mysterious intruder

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by another name: sometimes it is called *nihlêle*, in other cases again *pini*, words which have their equivalents in the Mataco and the Toba languages in the terms *aláh* and *kaipák* respectively. In regard to all these words we have to remember that they belong to the particular mystical terminology of the sorcerers and cannot exactly be translated into any civilized language. The Indian »arrow» or »splinter» is half an inanimate object, half a live being, half material, half spiritual, half natural, half supernatural. Whatever it is, it is to the primitive mind the most real thing possible, because its existence is manifested by its dreadful effects.

The Choroti Indian, who works evil against his fellow-tribesmen by throwing spells against them, is called a wizard (*ayïeu*). The expression for the nefarious operation itself is in the Choroti language *páhu ahuli sikiätsă*, (»to work evil against a fellow-man by means of witchcraft»). For the purpose of bewitching another Indian the sorcerer tries if possible to get hold of something that has been in close contact with the victim's body, for instance a single hair, a little saliva when he has spat on the ground, something of his excrement, a piece of his clothes, etc., and uses these things as vehicles for his curses. But even a medicine-man or curer, as we have seen, is called *ayïeu*, and there is thus no essential difference between an Indian practising black or nefarious magic and one practising white magic. A man in possession of a guardian spirit may use his art either for the benefit of his fellow-tribesmen or to harm them, according as to whether he regards them as his friends or as his foes.

Besides rheumatism, affections of the throat and the chest, arising from chill, are very common among the Chaco Indians during the dry season. The Indian explanation invariably is that an evil spirit has entered into that particular part of the body where the pain is felt. If a Choroti Indian suffers from head-ache and I ask him what is the matter with him, he will answer that he has a *möhsek* in the head; if he suffers from a catarrh, he will point to his throat or his chest and say that a *möhsek* has taken its seat in either of these parts of the body. In a village I once met an old woman who had her right fore-arm paralyzed, evidently in consequence of a fit of apoplexy. She explained to me that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and had tied a dirty woollen band round the arm at the wrist so as to prevent the evil spirit from penetrating further into the body.

If the demon is allowed to complete his work of destruction in the

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in the conjurations of the Toba medicine-men, as we shall presently find. C 755

These conjurations are varied with other manipulations, above all with blowing, spitting, and rubbing the bad spot. Massage regularly forms part of the treatment applied by the Chaco medicine-men, and is the only action which may really have relieving effects. — Ultimately the doctor again leans over the patient and starts to suck vigorously the bad spot. He turns away, spits and hawks up and behaves as if he were going to vomit. Thereupon he takes something from his mouth and, turning to the bystanders, shows it to them: it is the arrow, consisting of a pebble, a piece of bone, etc. which he pretends to have extracted from the patient's body. The latter should now recover; but it may be that there are several of them in his body, or that a new arrow is sent into it which he will feel on the following night. Generally therefore the treatment must be continued for several evenings.

The Choroti medicine-men also invoke their guardian spirits (*mōhsek eis*), and if they succeed in extracting the arrow, this is said to be ultimately due to the assistance of their good spirits. The invocation of the »good spirit» in connection with the treatment of sickness is however a form of worship that I have studied much better among the Mataco and the Tobas. C 755 776

The *M a t a c o* have exactly the same theory as to the nature of bodily disorders as the Choroti, ascribing curable »sickness» to possession by an *aitták sláhsa* (a »little» *aitták* or demon) and mortal epidemic disease to a *nahút*. The ultimate cause of sickness is witchcraft. To extract the »arrow» or splinter (*aláh*) discharged by the demon or his human controller is the ultimate aim of the medicine-man. But he cannot do it with his own powers, he needs the aid of his »good spirit», the *aitták talák*. If the good spirit does not come down to his assistance, the patient is bound to die. The invocation of the good spirit, or the prayer, is therefore the last and decisive action of the medicine-man's treatment of the sick person. M 753 755 776

Whereas the Choroti medicine-man does not generally use any magical instrument when he treats a patient, the particular instrument of the Mataco doctor is a sort of rattle, called *tahús*, consisting of a number of pieces of tin arranged round a circular piece of leather. When the instrument is shaken it produces a dull sound which is believed to inspire the spirits with fear. At certain other conjurations it is worn by the medicine-man like a cincture round the loins.

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He can be near the Pilcomayo[1] or in the bush without losing his way.

To meet a *welán* means death. Only the medicine-men are allowed to speak to them without danger. If a person is stolen by a *welán* he will become a medicine-man for he understands the ways and the language of the *welán*. The *welán* appear only at night. In order to ask them questions it is necessary to apply to a medicine-man who knows their language. The medicine-man enters a *yuchan* tree, the *welán* blows on him and the medicine-man in turn blows upon the people. By night the *welán* come to visit the medicine-men.

When a *welán* takes a person away that person can no longer speak and does not wish to remain at home any longer. He must be sung over for a month, at the end of which time he becomes a medicine-man.

55. Origin of Disease

A man was caught by a *welán* who made him a chief *welán*. The man who had become a *welán* changed his mother into one also. One day a man died and the people charged the *welán*-man with his death. They invited the *welán* to visit them under the pretence of presenting him with a sheep. The man accepted the invitation but before going he told his mother he would probably not return again. He went to the others who were glad to have him accept their invitation. They gave him a sheep, asking him to eat it immediately, but the *welán* refused and said that he would like to eat it upon reaching his home. So he went taking the animal with him. The men who had planned to kill him ran ahead and hid themselves on the path he was following. When they heard the bleating of the sheep they shot at him and the *welán*-man was mortally wounded. Feeling how deep the point of the arrow had penetrated he

[1] The big swamps formed by the Pilcomayo are real labyrinths in which one may become lost.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

told his murderers that they had killed him, but that he would revenge himself by killing them too. He took some of the blood which ran from his wound and threw it at them. The blood changed into disease and from that day on men have been killed by disease. Before that time disease did not exist. (XIII).

56. The Welán-Woman (Pedro)[1]

A woman was heard crying one night and when the men asked her what the trouble was she said that they had killed her son and that she was going to eat their sons. At midnight she left her house and caught and ate a child. She did this many times. When the parents of the children kept awake to protect them the *welán*-woman made herself invisible. Finally they could stand it no longer and decided to kill the woman. They killed her but because she was a *welán* she came to life again and went right on killing and eating children. The men realized she could not be killed permanently so they decided to look for another shelter. They hollowed out a *yuchan* and entered it but it was very hot and they were obliged to leave. They slept in the open and the woman ate many children. From there the *welán*-woman proceeded to another village, Pozo del Tigre, and started eating children there. The men of Pozo del Tigre proved more astute. They killed the *welán*-woman and then they started a big fire and burned her. When she was in the fire the embers craeked up and jumped in all directions. Those which fell in the forest changed into jaguars domestic cats, pumas, tapirs and snakes. Those which fell into the water became rayfish, *surubi*, *piranya*, *bagres*, *pacu* and other water animals.

57. The Spirits (Pedro)

The spirits, that haunt the imagination of the Matako, are called *hoʔnat-Lele* (dwellers of the ground) or [illegible]*i-Lele*

[1] This tale is the sequel of the preceding.

(inhabitants of the night). In Pedro's pronunciation the word for ghost was *na-Lele*.

When a spirit enters a body the person must sing, otherwise the spirit will never leave his victim, he will make him feel hot and cold alternately. All medicine-men have experienced these changes and the white men call malaria the disease caused by the presence of a spirit in a person's body.

Near Las Lomitas there is a dog spirit. His hair is like the hair of a sheep, his eyes like those of an owl only very sunken. He is as tall as a calf. He sometimes comes by night to the bush near Las Lomitas and catches women whom he makes sick. It is difficult to see him because when he has no intention to do harm he runs away when people approach him, as do the *ho?nat-Lele*.

There exists a species of spirits called *ihiǫL* which look like owls. One by the name of *Tapitax* invented pottery. Sometimes pots are found which belong to him. They are large and are buried in the earth up to the brim.

The *ho?nat-Lele* are bad spirits. They have the appearance of men, only they are lean and dark. They live in *yuchan* trees and roam about during the summer months, in winter they go underground. They make their presence known by singing and whistling. They make mead from honey and *algarroba* husks. They pile together the fibers of the husks.

58. The Man among the Spirits (Pedro)

A man was caught by the *ho?nat-Lele*. He remained with them for more than a year. When he returned he found himself in the middle of fields. He married a woman-spirit and lived the life of the spirits. Once he went with his wife to fetch honey out of a tree, which according to his wife, was full of it. It was midnight and as the man could not see, his wife pulled his eyelashes out and gave him hers so that he could see in the darkness. To dig out the honey the woman-spirit used an iron implement like a cutlass. She

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

XIII. The Diseases

753 776 755 The diseases are demons which have the appearence of men but are invisible. They wear feathers like medicine-men. Smallpox for instance is especially ugly. His head is swollen and full of small holes. He lives not for from Salta, in a cave on a big mountain. The demons of disease live under the ground or within the *yuchanes*. They leave their shelter to enter men and make them sick. In order to get them out of the bodies of sick people one must ask them what they want, for the demons always want something. One has to say, »What do you want?» The demon answers, »Food, dresses, a gun.» All these things are to be given him. But they are equally satisfied with only the sight of these things and men may very well eat the food or make use of the things whose essence the demons have received. It would be very dangerous to eat of a dish before the demon has helped himself. Men dance in order to scare a demon or chase him away. The demon is obliged to participate in the dancing and gets tired. When those who take part in a treatment have danced for a while, the magician speaks to the disease. The disease asks whether they are angry with him. The medicine-man answers, »No, we are dancing as usual.» The disease then says, »Then let us not dance any longer, for I am to dance to-morrow too.»

753 774 Each thing has its *husék* (spirit) or image and it is this image which the disease requires after he has stolen or entered the soul of the man and it is this soul which the medicine-man has gone to get. During the first part of all medical ceremonies, the medicine-man's spirit goes to the disease and asks him which things he wants in return for the sick man's soul.

[124] One of the reasons why the Matako always require payment to let themselves be photographed is that by photographing them one takes their image (spirit) and thus may hurt them. The money they get for the photograph may eventually

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serve to pay the medicine-man in case something happens to them.

The ceremonial objects whose spirit the disease takes away do not become any weaker, since they may be used directly afterwards.

Even though the disease has been given food, he remains insatiable and wants more. He also wants to take away the things he is offered, that is the reason why the medicine-man is obliged to blow on the objects lest the disease should stick to them. When the disease does not get what he wants, he becomes angry and kills his victim.

The disease, or a bad spirit, introduces into the body of the sick person small sticks, usually objects which will make him feel pain. The medicine-man has to take them away by sucking the aching parts and he blows the patient to get the sicknes out of his body. Before treating a patient a medicine-man adorns himself with feathers in order to look like disease or the demon who caused it. The diseases and the spirits are very fond of these ornaments and enjoy seeing them on those who cure the patient.

When the malady is not very serious, the patient is treated within his hut for economical reasons. To determine whether or not the patient is to be decorated depends upon the seriousness of his case. The medicine-man and the patient get under the same blanket and the former speaks to the disease. Thus the audience is not too large and the disease is easier to cope with. Sometimes it is satisfied with a quart of alcohol. A sick child is always cured inside the house, except when there is an organized ceremony through which they can profit toward the end.

According to the Indians vaccine exerts a powerful action against the disease and he can no longer attack the individuals thus vaccinated. Shots fired at the end of the ceremony puts the disease to flight and prevents him from desiring the gun with which one assistant danced. To keep away sickness it is good to hang the carapace of a *tatu*

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [292] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/217 cont./

Notes

753 755 843 1. This woman, who was about seven months pregnant, continued to carry enormous loads of dry wood, which provoked the illness to which she succumbed.

[761] 2. According to the opinion of the village, the death was due to the fact that she had become pregnant before her first child knew how to feed itself.

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Chapter XIII.

Belief in „good spirits".

776 I have so far mainly spoken of such spirits of the Chaco Indians as are regarded as essentially evilly disposed to mankind, being looked upon as the authors of sickness and misfortune. But the religion of these Indians is by no means only a pure demonology. They also assume the existence of »good spirits» and these from a certain point of view are of the greatest interest. The Chaco Indians especially speak of their good spirits with reference to the guardian spirits of the medicine-men and the spirits animating certain plants. With the former I shall deal presently. For the moment a few words may be said of the spirits which are
776 believed to animate the *plants*. Of course, there are also evil or harmful
824 plant spirits. The character of the spirit animating a tree or plant is naturally first of all determined according to the useful or harmful properties of that tree or plant. Thus plants producing poisonous fruits harmful to man, are animated by evil spirits, since the effects are always ascribed to the indwelling spirit, the »soul» of the plant. Likewise, in
[754] the cactus thorns, of which malignant sorcerers avail themselves in throwing spells, are animated by evil *mõhsek*, *aittáh*, *peyák*, according to the names different tribes give these demons. Still the Chaco Indians pay special attention to the spirits of such trees or plants as produce edible or otherwise useful fruit, which in a country like Chaco are of essential importance to the inhabitants.

776 Among trees which from an alimental point of view are of great import-
824 ance to the Chaco Indians I have mentioned the algaroba, the chañar,
262 and the tusca, the fruits of which ripen in the months October to February. It is particularly these trees which are said to be animated by »good spirits» who control their growth and cause their fruits to ripen.

114 down on the field, from the reports of excellent informants. They have been obtained in San Andres and Yuto, on the Pilcomayo river, and in San Patricio, on the river Bermejo.

Birth and Infancy

842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this is considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made

756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

● [754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[562] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing.

Magic

789 609 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the cugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

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man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

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In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a'hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

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Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

Chaco Indians SI4

ignorant whites, in their turn, have a great deal of faith in the Indian witch doctors. C M 755 648

I know for a fact that rich ranchers have called Indians to come and treat them.

The witch doctors attempt to cure their patients by exorcising the a'hots by shouting, leaping, and blowing and spitting into the sick person's mouth. They prescribe, along with this exorcising activity, certain homeopathic remedies such as dieting, bathing and I believe massaging also. M 755

The faith which they place in their incantations does not wane even in the presence of white man's medicine.

It happened once while we were on board the river boat that the boat stuck fast in the mud. A number of Indians surrounded us and a group of them brought forward a sick Indian for us to cure. We did not have our interpreter with us on that occasion, but I was able to put my notes to some use and finally understood that the invalid had been bitten by a snake: -- "Chiasquietáj-Kíá" -- "snake-bite remedy" was what they were saying. M 123 755

We had a small medicine chest and hurriedly applied ammonia to the bite. It was extremely important for us that the outcome of our ministrations be a positive one for we needed to gain prestige and also friends among the Indians, for relations were strained and some days previously we had been ambushed by a group of them who had then fired on us at point blank range.

Our patient, however, improved very slowly and there were times during the first three days -- a superstitiously critical period -- in which we had serious doubts of his recovering, because the swelling kept growing upwards towards the groin and belly and, if it had reached the area close to the heart all would have been over for him

During this whole period of treatment -- which was carried on in a pretty rigorous fashion, [210] the situation hardly calling for ladies with kid gloves -- the patient took only water, as the witch doctors prescribed, and then, during the night while the crew slept, the doctors would begin to chant húu húu húu... héé héé héé... hii hii hii... and then once more húu húu húu, etc. Every now and again they would spit and blow like so many bellows upon the wound and other parts of the body, keeping this up for hours on end.

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I, who used to stay up very late, both to do my stint at guard duty and to take advantage of a few uninterrupted hours for study, used to take up a stand close to them. At first my presence there made them keep quiet, but later on, taking heart at my reiterated hiss tzilataj ("very pretty"), and seeing that I did not make fun of them, they continued in spite of my being there.

At last, after twenty days, the sick man got well.

One of the very strange treatments is the one which they ad- 752
minister to those who have been poisoned by a sting ray, which fish can administer an extremely painful and sometimes mortal wound. This treatment consists in placing the offended part, which is usually the ankle, over the smoke given off from the cracks in burning palo santo [lignum vital --Translator], which is a resinous wood, after which a woman in her menstruating period is to sit astride it. I have been assured by whites who have made the experiment that it is a very efficacious remedy.

Every treatment for sickness or wounds however needs, if it 756
is to have any virtue, to be in the hands of a witch doctor (male), or at least in those of a female witch doctor.

Not everyone can be a witch doctor, and just as the members of this profession make their patients pay according to the seriousness of the malady and the means of the individual, either in skins, animals, food or other things, so also does this profession have its seamy side in which quarrels and deception occur. In addition to this and in order to get greater prestige they shroud themselves in mystery and the supernatural. So it is that in the village of Granadero the Indians, speaking about a young man who was already embarked on this career, said that as a boy he had vanished and then reappeared after two years which he had spent underground among the a'hot, these a'hot having carried him off in order to instruct him in the art and imbue him with the virtues of doctor and priest.

While on the subject of these frauds I must tell of an occasion when things almost took a bad turn for me. I went to call on 123
Chief Granadero who was just recovering from a long illness. I 755
had with me, as is my custom, a pocket inkwell and a pen. Granadero noticed these things and asked me what they were. I, thinking to please him flourished the inkwell and pen and set about writing, but saw in a moment that Granadero had become furious and menacing -- his doctors had just cured him of the a'hot which

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had been tormenting him for so long, and had extracted from his body several pens and a pencil, under guise of which, they said, the a'hot had been harming him.

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[211] The women seem to be extraordinarily able as mid-wives.

With singular ability they wait for the critical moment of labor and then, raising and holding the mother-to-be they shake her and keep uttering their customary exorcisms until they are successful in their endeavors.

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However, if one wishes to be in on an interesting spectacle one must see an invalid getting the full treatment in a village.

One evening while I was camped near a tribe I became curious on hearing a great sound of voices and the repercussion of strong blows on the ground. As my relations with these Indians was of the very best I did not hesitate to go to see what was afoot. In the midst of the village, in a sort of central square, I saw a circle of black figures illuminated fitfully by the blaze of the fires; they were the squaws and men who were sitting on their heels smoking in silence. In the center of the circle, in a space of about eight meters, four robust men with ostrich feathers and timbrels at their ankles, wrists, waists and on their heads were running back and forth, with their hands raised, gesticulating wildly and rattling some gourds half filled with seeds which added to the noise. They ran about singing and howling, and one could see that they were panting and covered with sweat. They would straighten out their legs and pound the ground with the whole sole of their feet, and as they did this they would raise their voices in a mad, desperate way, with their arms on high, heads to one side and body curved over.

Alternately two of them would stop, crouch, move their heads rapidly from right to left and up and down, howl and blow and spit on the backs, legs, heads and mouths of two invalids who were seated in their midst.

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The two sick men were suffering terribly from the a'hots which had entered their bodies in the form of rheumatic pains, and the witch doctors were attempting to drive them out with their infernal dance. This, it was understood, they would be unable to do until they managed, by means of their unbridled racing about and thumping, to tire and intimidate the a'hots who, with evil intent

and at the very same time were dancing precisely the same dance underground immediately beneath them. The object of making so much noise was to intercept all communication with the sickness a'hots who were in the two men. The best doctor is the one who most jumps, howls and beats the earth with his feet. 755

The public who surrounded these goings on was there to give importance and greater virtue to the treatment, but the suspicion was in the air that the a'hot, on leaving the body of the possessed might take it into its mind to enter one of the other persons present.

This scene convinces me that: among the Indians, doctors earn their bread by the sweat of their... whole bodies; that among them also deceivers, by dint of much deceiving, finally [212] deceive themselves; and that the rabble was really convinced of the efficacy of the exorcisms.

And I was about to smile, moved by scorn and pity, but I remembered that c'etait tout comme chez nous [it was all much the same as it is with us--Translator] and... the smile died before it was born.

Chapter XII

Social Matters

These Indians do not differentiate the seasons of the year as we do, but rather by the several harvests: thus they speak of the season of algarrobo pod harvest, etc. 805

How could they even begin to divide the year into months or moons if they only count up to four? This very fact guarantees us a priori that they have not busied themselves with establishing the laws of the earth's or sun's movements. [802]

In spite of this it is remarkable that they divide the day up into innumerable portions according to the position of the sun, which takes the place of our hours. They also differentiate between various constellations such as the Pleiades, Venus, the Milky Way, and Centaur. [821]

And yet they do not have a word meaning "year." The Matacos use one, c-lúppe, which means period, and which has the same indeterminate meaning which that word has with us. Instead of "day," they say "sun" (i-qûa-la), and in place of "month,"

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776 The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared
761 because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

753 Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance,
776 the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút teláh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is
[755] possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyá*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamsa* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mataco
[752] for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by
776 a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural
821 phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

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in the conjurations of the Toba medicine-men, as we shall presently find. C 755

These conjurations are varied with other manipulations, above all with blowing, spitting, and rubbing the bad spot. Massage regularly forms part of the treatment applied by the Chaco medicine-men, and is the only action which may really have relieving effects. — Ultimately the doctor again leans over the patient and starts to suck vigorously the bad spot. He turns away, spits and hawks up and behaves as if he were going to vomit. Thereupon he takes something from his mouth and, turning to the bystanders, shows it to them: it is the arrow, consisting of a pebble, a piece of bone, etc. which he pretends to have extracted from the patient's body. The latter should now recover; but it may be that there are several of them in his body, or that a new arrow is sent into it which he will feel on the following night. Generally therefore the treatment must be continued for several evenings.

The Choroti medicine-men also invoke their guardian spirits (*mōhsek eis*), and if they succeed in extracting the arrow, this is said to be ultimately due to the assistance of their good spirits. The invocation of the »good spirit» in connection with the treatment of sickness is however a form of worship that I have studied much better among the Mataco and the Tobas. C 755 776

The *M a t a c o* have exactly the same theory as to the nature of bodily disorders as the Choroti, ascribing curable »sickness» to possession by an *aittáh sláhsa* (a »little» *aittáh* or demon) and mortal epidemic disease to a *nahút*. The ultimate cause of sickness is witchcraft. To extract the »arrow» or splinter (*aláh*) discharged by the demon or his human controller is the ultimate aim of the medicine-man. But he cannot do it with his own powers, he needs the aid of his »good spirit», the *aittáh talák*. If the good spirit does not come down to his assistance, the patient is bound to die. The invocation of the good spirit, or the prayer, is therefore the last and decisive action of the medicine-man's treatment of the sick person. M 753 755 776

Whereas the Choroti medicine-man does not generally use any magical instrument when he treats a patient, the particular instrument of the Mataco doctor is a sort of rattle, called *tahús*, consisting of a number of pieces of tin arranged round a circular piece of leather. When the instrument is shaken it produces a dull sound which is believed to inspire the spirits with fear. At certain other conjurations it is worn by the medicine-man like a cincture round the loins.

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755 In the operations of the Mataco medicine-man, more clearly than in the operations of the Choroti curer, we can distingush two different phases: firstly, the conjuration proper, (*tilahán jāvús*) when the curer is trying to expel, by his incantations, the evil spirit from the patient's body; and secondly, the invocation of the »good spirits» (*aitláh talák*), who is besought to come down from the heavens and help the curer to extract the splinter. This act has the character of a prayer and is called *ihanék*.

Generally it is easy to decide whether a conjuration or a prayer is in question. In the conjuration the medicine-man chants in a strong and commanding voice, and shouts and exclamations, likely to inspire the evil spirit with terror, frequently form part of it. In the prayer again the doctor chants in a low and supplicating, sometimes even trembling voice, as if he were trying to awaken the compassion of his guardian spirit. In this act the rattle is never used.

In opposition to what may be said for instance of the Toba medicine-man, the conjuration of the Mataco curer is not melodious but extremely monotonous and little attractive. He chants in a harsh and low voice, coming from the depths of the chest. As usual in the conjurations of the Chaco sorcerers, there are few articulate words to be distinguished; mostly the chant consists of refrains, such as *ai*, *ai*, *hoi*, *hoi*, *hai*, *hayi*, etc., which are incessantly repeated.

As to the conjuration proper, different medicine-men chant in somewhat different ways, but the procedure is essentially the same. There are the same operations in the form of spitting, blowing, rubbing the bad spot, sucking etc., varying with verbal conjurations and shaking of the rattle. The following is an instance of a conjuration which I witnessed:

Ai, ai, ai, ai, ai, ai,
Ai, ai, ai, ai, ai, ai,
hai, hayi, hai, hayi, hai, hayi,
hayá, hayá, hayá,
hai, hayi, and so forth.

The doctor interrupts himself from time to time, and starts to blow and spit and to shake the rattle close to the part of the body which is the seat of the evil.

In another case he pronounces with much vigour, the following conjuration:

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Hämák, hämóh, hämák hämóh,
hämák, hamóya, hämák, hamóya,
hämák, hämóh, etc.

Hämák means 'malicious', evil, and *hämóh* 'go away'. The meaning of the whole conjuration thus is: »go away, evil demon!» The phrase, being incessantly repeated in conjunction with the shaking of the rattle and other operations, is supposed to have the effect of forcing the demon to leave the body.

The Mataco medicine-men however generally try to make their conjurations of the demons of sickness more effective through *dancing*. Sometimes the doctor himself interrupts his incantations and other operations and starts to dance round the patient, sometimes other Indian men or women perform a savage dance round the patient while the curer leans over him. The dance which has for its object to conjure a disease-demon is called *Nahútsak* by the Mataco. The very name (drived from *nahút*, evil spirit) indicates the purely ceremonial character of this dance. There are however different forms of the *Nahútsak*. In some cases it is a sort of ring-dance; in other cases the Mataco by this name denote a dance of the same type as the *Nahót dónnaran* of the Tobas, which will presently be described.

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To give the reader an idea of the Mataco dance *Nahútsak* in a case of sickness I may first borrow the following vivid description of a conjuration which the Italian explorer Pelleschi once witnessed in a Mataco village in the Argentine Gran Chaco. »In the midst of the tolderia», he tells us, »in a sort of open square, I saw a circle of black figures lightèd up here and there by the flames of the great fire: these were women and men sitting on their heels silently smoking. Within the circle four robust men were running backwards and forwards within a space of about eight yards. Ostrich feathers and little bells were fastened to their ankles, wrists, heads and waists . . In their hands, which were always lifted up in gesticulation, they held small gourds, half-filled with grain, and these, being shaken, added to the din. They rushed about shouting and yelling, panting and sweating; thrusting out their legs, they stamped hard upon the ground, and then raised their voices in desperation, lifting up their arms, with head bowed and body curved. By turns two of them would stop short, and squatting on the ground would shake their heads rapidly from left to right, backwards and forwards, groaning, blowing, and spitting on the back, legs, head and face of two sick persons who had been

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755 535 placed in their midst .... The spectators remained to do honour to the treatment and increase its efficacy, but not without fear that the *ahút*, on quitting the body of the sick man might enter into theirs».[1])

This savage dance was typical of the Indian dances as far as they have the character of magical conjurations. The Indians firmly believe that they can terrify and expel the evil demon who has taken possession of the patient by violent movements and menacing gestures such as those just described. As to the ostrich feathers which the sorcerers had fastened to ankles, wrists, head and waist, some words of explanation may be added. The feather ornaments which the Indians wear in most of their dances and conjurations are not real ornaments but magical charms which eke out the powers emanating from the whole personality of the sorcerer. Like body-paintings, necklaces made of animals' teeth, rattle bells and gourds etc. they effectively help in conjuring the evil spirits.

The following is a conjuration accompanied by dancing which I myself witnessed in a Mataco village in the Bolivian Gran Chaco. Two Indian sorcerers were trying to cure a horse which was evidently badly attacked by an *aittáh* or *nahút*. The cure took place on various successive nights in an open place outside the *tolderia*. One of the sorcerers chanted in the usual way with his closed hand laid on the neck of the sick horse; the other both chanted and danced. Stamping with the feet alternately on the ground to the measure of his chant, he moved some ten steps away from the horse and then back again, repeating these movements several times. In his hand he held the rattle which he shook incessantly as an accompaniment to his dance and chanting. During the dance the man now and then took up a pebble or a small stick from the ground and threw it into the forest, spitting at the same time vigorously in the same direction. On the path where he moved he had laid some live embers. After a while the sorcerer interrupted his dance, stood close to the horse by the side of his colleague, and shaking the rattle heartily over the animal he shouted several times in a loud voice: *yame! yame! yame!*, that is to say, »go out, go out, go out!» These were the only words uttered during the whole conjuration. During his chanting the sorcerers only pronounced refrains such *hõ, hõ, hõ, a, a, a*, and so forth. The tune which the dancer again and again repeated and accompanied with his rattle was the following:

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[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 140.

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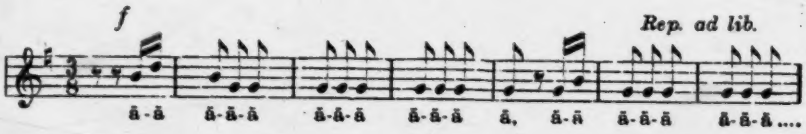

It is evident that the intention of the sorcerer was to drive away the evil demon into the forest in the direction in which he moved during the dance. With the same intention he threw the pebbles and spat in that direction. Again, the object of the embers placed on the path, as the Indians explained to me, was to burn the demon after it had been forced to leave the horse. — 755

The invocation of the »good spirit», an act called *ihanéh* by the Mataco, generally immediately follows the conjuration proper, but may also take place without a preceeding conjuration. It is an important act, since on the intervention of the good spirit the success of the whole treatment depends, but externally it does not differ much from a conjuration. At the »prayer», however, the rattle is never used. In all cases which came under my notice the chant or invocation of the good spirit was a chant without words. Evidently the medicine-man thinks that the tone of his voice alone is enough to move the compassion of the guardian spirit. 755 782

Thus, in one invocation of the good spirit which I witnessed the doctor again and again repeated the following refrains:

Am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum,
uh! am gaum, gaum, uh! aum, gaum, gaum, etc.

in another again he incessantly repeated:

ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho,
ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, etc., etc.

Lastly follows the usual extraction of the »arrow» or splinter, if the medicine-man has been successful in his invocation of the good spirit and the latter has come down to his assistance. Generally the doctor draws out the evil by sucking. He spits out the splinter on the ground, thereupon shows it to the bystanders, and declares that it is the thing that has caused the evil. The procedure is thus exactly the same as among the Choroti. 755

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763 ly refers to a custom already abandoned by the Tobas. It reminds us
766 of a similar custom of the Choroti who, as I have stated have been in the
171 habit of killing old, decrepit men with an arrow-shot in the heart to prevent them from reappearing as evil death-bringing spirits. The fact that, as Mr. Grubb relates, the Lenguas have been in the habit of burying hopelessly sick patients alive shows that such cruel customs have been wide-spread among the Chaco tribes. Its motives, as I have pointed out before, [1]) are to be sought in superstitious fear. Among all Indians the spirits of old men — especially those of medicine-men and sorcerers — are particularly feared. If such a person is allowed to die a natural death, this means that the evil spirit who caused the sickness has wholly taken possession of his soul, identified himself with it, and changed the departed Indian into an evil, destructive demon. This, according to the idea of the Indians, can be prevented by giving such a patient a violent death before he is killed by the disease-demon. [2])

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751 Lastly, I may remark that there is not in the manipulations of the
●755 medicine-man much that has the character of what we may call a »natural» cure, the only operations likely to give real relief being the massage of the sick spot and the suction, which in fact is sometimes so strong that it almost amounts to cupping. Various drugs and herbs are indeed used by the Chaco Indians for curative purposes and are not seldom alleged to have really healing effects [3]). These, however, are not exclusively used by the medicine-men; most elderly men seem to know about them. In the treatment of the professional medicine-men these remedies, curiously enough, seem to play but a subordinate part, magical conjurations being regarded as more important. — When a patient recovers in consequence of a medicine-man's »cure», as is not seldom the case, the phenomenon must first of all be ascribed to self-suggestion on the part of the patient, and the importance of this kind of »psychical treatment», in the case of primitive peoples, must not be underrated.

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[1]) See above, p. 112.

[2]) See below, p. 191.

[3]) Most »natural» remedies of the Chaco Indians are used for outward application, and they generally consist of decoctions made from certain leaves and roots. There is not much hygiene to be traced in the therapeutics of these Indians, nor do I believe that their remedies have much healing effect.

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The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti, Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsek*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious.

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Nocténes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not »ornaments« in the civilized sense of the word.

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures

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and they are not even meant to be decorations. Among the Choroti it was no rare thing to see old men and women — especially when they were suffering from some pulmonary catarrh or cough, or from rheumatism — wearing a cord or strap bound tightly round the chest. The idea appeared to be that the demon who had entered into the chest and caused the evil should be forced to leave the body or at least prevented from penetrating further. On one occasion I met an old woman whose right forearm had been paralyzed, probably through a fit of apoplexy. She had a dirty woollen band tied round the arm at the wrist, and when I wanted to remove the useless thing, she would not allow it, declaring that it was »good». I soon learnt that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and realised that the band was »good» as a sort of charm against the demon. Just as civilized people may, in a case of snake-bite, apply a ligature or cord round the bitten limb above the wound so as to prevent the poison from spreading, so the Indians consider such ligatures as preventive of evil spirits. Among the Choroti the band is not put on with any ceremonies, but probably the material itself is supposed to have some mysterious power. However this may be, in these cords or bands tied round the breast or the arms, we have, I think, the most simple specimens of bracelets, girdles, and other magical ornaments of the same type used by the Indians.

In addition to the magical ornaments here touched upon the Chaco Indians use various kinds of amulets and charms consisting of the tusks or claws of the jaguar or other wild animals, in feathers of birds, mussel shells etc., but I shall not dwell upon this side of the practical religion of the Indians. What I have still to pay particular attention to are their funeral rites and ceremonies.

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XIII. The Diseases

753 The diseases are demons which have the appearence of
776 men but are invisible. They wear feathers like medicine-
men. Smallpox for instance is especially ugly. His head
● 755 is swollen and full of small holes. He lives not for from
Salta, in a cave on a big mountain. The demons of disease
live under the ground or within the *yuchanes*. They leave
their shelter to enter men and make them sick. In order
to get them out of the bodies of sick people one must ask
them what they want, for the demons always want some-
thing. One has to say, »What do you want?» The demon
answers, »Food, dresses, a gun.» All these things are to be
given him. But they are equally satisfied with only the
sight of these things and men may very well eat the food or
make use of the things whose essence the demons have
received. It would be very dangerous to eat of a dish before
the demon has helped himself. Men dance in order to scare
a demon or chase him away. The demon is obliged to parti-
cipate in the dancing and gets tired. When those who take
part in a treatment have danced for a while, the magician
speaks to the disease. The disease asks whether they are
angry with him. The medicine-man answers, »No, we are
dancing as usual.» The disease then says, »Then let us not
dance any longer, for I am to dance to-morrow too.»

753 Each thing has its *husék* (spirit) or image and it is this
774 image which the disease requires after he has stolen or
entered the soul of the man and it is this soul which the
medicine-man has gone to get. During the first part of all
medical ceremonies, the medicine-man's spirit goes to the
disease and asks him which things he wants in return for
the sick man's soul.

[124] One of the reasons why the Matako always require payment
to let themselves be photographed is that by photographing
them one takes their image (spirit) and thus may hurt them.
The money they get for the photograph may eventually

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serve to pay the medicine-man in case something happens to them. 753 774

The ceremonial objects whose spirit the disease takes away do not become any weaker, since they may be used directly afterwards.

Even though the disease has been given food, he remains insatiable and wants more. He also wants to take away the things he is offered, that is the reason why the medicine-man is obliged to blow on the objects lest the disease should stick to them. When the disease does not get what he wants, he becomes angry and kills his victim.

The disease, or a bad spirit, introduces into the body of the sick person small sticks, usually objects which will make him feel pain. The medicine-man has to take them away by sucking the aching parts and he blows the patient to get the sicknes out of his body. Before treating a patient a medicine-man adorns himself with feathers in order to look like disease or the demon who caused it. The diseases and the spirits are very fond of these ornaments and enjoy seeing them on those who cure the patient. 753 755

When the malady is not very serious, the patient is treated within his hut for economical reasons. To determine whether or not the patient is to be decorated depends upon the seriousness of his case. The medicine-man and the patient get under the same blanket and the former speaks to the disease. Thus the audience is not too large and the disease is easier to cope with. Sometimes it is satisfied with a quart of alcohol. A sick child is always cured inside the house, except when there is an organized ceremony through which they can profit toward the end. 755

According to the Indians vaccine exerts a powerful action against the disease and he can no longer attack the individuals thus vaccinated. Shots fired at the end of the ceremony puts the disease to flight and prevents him from desiring the gun with which one assistant danced. To keep away sickness it is good to hang the carapace of a *tatu* 751

careta (big armadillo) or the skin of an alligator in the house. The disease will think that the animals are there and will not go into the house.

a) *The Treatment of Disease*

I attended a ceremony for the treatment of disease. The ceremony took place in front of some huts, the space was closed in by awnings and cloth. Inside the enclosure were the patient, the medicine-man and a certain number of individuals who assisted the latter. The patient, an old man, was sitting in the center of the space, his body carefully covered with cloth. The medicine-man stood near him and while murmuring incantations blew on the patient's body through his half clenched hand, beginning with his back, then the shoulders, the face and so on. In the meantime four or five men were dancing without interruption and made all the noise they could with a belt of big bells. They had tied to their feet anklets of deer hoofs and wore around their waists belts of ostrich feathers and on their heads were diadems. One of them held in his hand a bunch of ostrich feathers.

Their dance consisted of a cadenced and half-jumping walk with slightly bent knees. Some dancers went forward or backward while others stayed in the same spot. During the ceremony the medicine-man received the help of another old man who was also squatting at the patient's side. He began muttering incantations and blowing on the sick man as hard as he could. After one hour of this utterly exhausting exercise, the medicine-man went to a pot full of rice which was carefully concealed by a sheet near the patient. He crouched under the sheet and recited in a supplicative voice a long incantation over the food. Afterwards he blew on the rice with all his strength. He then offered goodly portions of it to all who had taken part in the ceremony. Then the medicine-man went to two *caraguatá* bags full of dresses. He covered them with a cloth under which he crouched. He

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pronounced the same incantation, blew on the dresses which were unfolded and taken away. On the heap of dresses had been placed a gun wrapped in a red belt richly inlaid with shells. One of the dancers seized the gun and slinging it over his shoulder executed a dance bearing a certain likeness to the one he had done before. The dancers were relatives of the sick man, probably his sons.

b) *Treatment of Disease*

A rich woman who was seriously ill was cured by five renowned medicine men. A big open space of about fifteen feet square was cleared not far from her house. Wooden posts were erected and a sort of tent set up. One of the posts, about 20 feet high, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentine flag. Around the tent were placed the objects required by the disease, those which are supposed to please him, a mosquito net, a weaving loom, an old suitcase, pieces of gaudily colored cloth, a saddle, a soldier's coat, a lamp, a lance or a gun. A little further away fires were burning where the disease's food was being prepared and a pail of water was being heated for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a pile of hay and old rags. She had put on her best dress and was covered with ritual ornaments. The five shamans, who were old men, were equally adorned with feather belts, rattles, tropical helmets and other precious objects. The lower part of their faces was painted black.

There were also some twenty dancers wearing feathers, red belts adorned with shells, rattles, caps, red pieces of cloth, whistles and old broken watches, while perhaps ten old women ran about holding rags in their hands and one even held an umbrella. Everybody, including the sick person, danced and sang, at times the medicine-men and the sick woman stopped, they blew on her and the dancing was resumed. After a while the chief medicine-man whistled on

his bone flute and the dance stopped abruptly. The sick woman danced alone, lifting slowly one foot and then the other two or three inches above the ground, without moving from one spot. In the meantime two medicine-men shook their rattles. A man clapped his hands laughing, and others shook their rattle gourds. It lasted for about ten minutes, then the medicine-men joined the dance, but for a short time only. After a pause, two of them approached the sick woman and started undressing her. In the meantime another medicine-man was shaking his rattle all along her body, beginning with the head. All the ornaments were slowly removed, the assistants struck the ground at the place where these ornaments fell, and then picked them up and ran to throw them away. They shook them several times, then put them carefully in order. The sick woman sat up in the middle of her tent and was given a drink. The ceremony was interrupted, then resumed again. The entire ceremony lasted from the 20th to the 24th of March, every day from 8 to 11 o'clock and in the evening from 8 to 10 o'clock. Shots were fired every day in order to drive away the disease.

On the 26th of March another woman, who manifested the same symptoms as the first, was cured in the following way: The place already described was used, but the flag was removed and replaced with a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers and on top of the staff there was tied a large bunch of ostrich feathers. The staff itself was decorated with ritual belts, woolen belts trimmed with snail shell beads. On the cross-bars, which separated the tent from the village, offerings of the same type as for the preceding ceremony were placed. During the cure, the sick woman remained sitting the whole time on a pile of hay in the center of the tent, surrounded by four medicine-men and about ten dancers, and further away were six or seven women. All were adorned with ritual belts and bells and all were dancing and singing. A passage had been opened between the cross-bars which was meant as an exit for the disease. If someone

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stood in the entrance he did not prevent the disease from escaping but he did expose himself to contracting it. 755 535

At a signal from the chief medicine-men, the dancing was interrupted. Two men seized a white and red striped poncho by its extremities and began to dance, making side jumps legs parted. They went to the sick person and put the poncho on her, then they ran with it to the exit and shook it there. They repeated this several times, then they wrapped the woman from head to foot with the poncho and a medicine-man started rubbing her through the cloth, while everybody sang without dancing. After a while the twisted poncho was removed, taken to the exit and thrown away. Then the dance began again. An assistant sprinkled water on the ground and the chief medicine-man stopped the dance once more. He set down near the sick woman, covering himself entirely with a large black blanket and started speaking to the disease. In the meantine, the man who was moistening the ground brought a pail of water and with the assistance of one of the medicine-men he washed the face, head and body of the patient, then she was placed with her feet toward the exit. During the course of the dance, the assistant moistened the shoulders of the male dancers, while an old [302] man painted the women's faces, making two red dots on their cheeks and a stripe along the nose. During this dance a medicine-man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a piece of red cloth. After a while the woman lay down and the dance went on, the paricipants assuming threatening expressions, then suddenly all looked very satisfied. The ceremony was interrupted, then after an hour's time it was resumed.

On the following day another woman was taken sick — but not such a rich one — and another treatment of a more modest character was undertaken. In front of the woman's house a tent was stretched and she was placed in the tent. The offerings consisted only of some pieces of cloth and a few bags. When I arrived the chief medicine-man was speak- 755

755 ing to the disease while an old woman, who was a magician, sang and blew on the patient. The others were talking among themselves without paying any attention to what was happening. After a pause, during which everybody drank some of the wine required by the disease, a singing man started to run around the patient, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine-man spoke once more with disease while the medicine-woman continued blowing on the patient and another medicine-man placed around the head of the patient front pages of illustrated papers and popular novels. The man who was running stopped and the chief medicine-man started talking with the others. Everybody sat down and drank some water, then two women began to walk rapidly around the others while they sang. One of them stopped and after a short while the other [535] one stopped too. Then all who were present started dancing. The dance was interrupted only by the coughing of the patient who seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. She actually died during the ceremony. Immediately after her [764] death the dance stopped. The old women ran about singing and shaking their rattles. Two men laid the dead woman on her right side and folded her legs and arms. They wrapped her in the pieces of cloth on which she had been lying and she was taken to her home. The medicine-men undressed quietly while the women of the family uttered lamentations.

c) *General Expulsion of Disease*

755 292 The ceremony for general expulsion of disease took place early in the morning in the open air, far from all houses. It was performed by all the medicine-men of the village standing in a row. All were holding in their hands a rattle-gourd [534] and a bone whistle. Some were provided with strips of cloth to which were attached rattles; the strips were worn across the chest or hung at the elbow. Others wore ceremonial shirts, some wore shirts made of *caraguatá* fiber and one

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wore a red knitted shirt of wool decorated with shells. Many wore on their foreheads frontlets trimmed with feathers. Another ceremonial accessory worn by most of them consisted of a bunch ostrich or *potsax* feathers. Two especially famous medicine-men had their faces painted black and red and on the hat of one of them were ostrich feathers. Naturally among the performers were a number of women, some of whom had their cheeks painted red. In front of the performer's row some spears had been stuck into the ground with the points downward. A spear with the point upward was also stuck in the ground at the same distance away as the others. During the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was fixed to the spear with the head pointed up. When I arrived I noticed in front of the row a young man who was not a magician. He was grinding into a calabash the *hatax* seeds from which the medicine-men later took pinches.

The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical to that sung by the medicine-men when curing diseases. The singing was punctuated by the rattling of the gourds and from time to time by the clacking of hoof and rattle necklaces and the whistling of the flutes. Each blowing of the whistle indicated a new phase in the traditional sequence of events associated with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine-man, its arrival or departure from a given place). The rattle-gourd is sometimes brandished in a theatening manner as though to scare away an invisible being. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, some of the performers took a snuff of *hatax* powder. Those who had bunches of feathers stretched them forward making the same gesture which has already been described when speaking of the rattles. One of the performers was running in front and behind his colleagues, holding a bunch of feathers in his hand and dusting them off from head to foot. He was assisted by another who was holding bells and rattles which he shook behind his companions. After they had taken a snuff of *hatax* the performers went on singing, shak-

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755 533 ing the rattles and performing threatening gestures. Some of the medicine-men sang the song of their own spirits ignoring the chants of their colleagues.

755 These preliminaries were succeeded by a direct attack against the disease. Some individuals stepped out from the row and with violent gestures each brandished his bunch of feathers or the rattle-gourds then returned to their places in line. A man began kicking the earth and was immediately imitated by others who took up handfuls of dust which they threw in front of themselves. The whole troop followed this example and they rushed against the disease. Some concentrated all their strength on a special spot as though they had driven the Disease there, hitting the spot repeatedly with their sabers or bunches of feathers, then stamping on the ground as though they had buried their victim. The attack against the invisible enemy lasted for a long time, much enthusiasm being shown. Others brandished bunches of feathers which they had tied to the points of their spears.

The second part of the ceremony corresponds to what we might call a general desinfection. The medicine-men first wiped one another off, then let their gourds rattle quite close to their colleagues, then blew on each other's heads and necks as though for illness. Then everyone, both men and women, who had attended the ceremony were called. They all sat down and the medicine-men and-women went to them, wiped their bodies with bunches of feathers, blew on their heads and let the rattles tinkle all along their bodies. These rites were performed with the same care on children as on adults. Our friend Sanchez was given special attention. Aften having been blown on by the *cacique* and chief medicine-man, assisted by four magicians, two of whom blew on him and sang, the others shook their rattles, bells and gourds. The medicine-men who had remained in the same place turned around and repeated all the gestures they had performed before. Once more some of them stepped out of the file to cut grass under which they frantically buried the

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disease. The sounds of the whistles followed each other at closer intervals and the rattles were shaken with still more energy and persistance. The ceremony was finished when all the members of the community were relieved of the bad influence which had entered them. The expelled disease was the aphtous fever from which the cattle were suffering at that time and which seriously affected the health of many individuals, who had eaten contaminated meat and become ill.

The medicine-men had changed their spirits into *istins* (sort of ravens) to call on the disease. As the disease was particularly severe at this time the first attempt at conciliation did not meet with much success. The men had to change into *masa* (earth bees). When the disease is being expelled, it is chased into the ground.

XIV. Treatment of People Possessed by Ho?nat-Lele

Upon visiting a Matako settlement (near Las Lomitas, Formosa) one night I had the opportunity to be present at the curing of two cases of demoniac possession. In the first case the patient was a girl of 13 or 14 and in the other a child. The girl had gone to the bush and had been caught by a *nǫoLe* or a *ho?nat-Lele* who lives in thickets under the earth. It was not a *welán* who entered the body of the girl as the *welán* live in the *yuchan* only and the girl had not walked near one of these trees. The *ho?nat-Lele* made its presence known through the girl's hysterical fits. She cried and sobbed as though she were in pain. The Indians told me something was hurting her, although she did not suffer from any disease. They laid particular stress upon this fact. When I arrived the girl was surrounded by an old man who acted as medicine-man, her father, two aunts and another man, whose relationship with the patient I was unable to determine. Each had put on a red poncho with white stripes. The possessed girl and all those with her were standing, with the exception of the medicine-man, who was squatting near the patient's legs.

They were as close to the patient as possible and were muttering a low and monotonous chant, marking the rhythm with movements of their bodies. The medicine-man sang in a loud voice and shook rhythmically at regular intervals a belt from which hung hoofs and metal rattles. He brought his instrument quite close to the possessed woman then pulled it back against himself. At a certain moment he pressed the girl's legs with his arms and let the bells tinkle behind her. The poncho was suddenly taken away and the possessed girl burst into tears. I could then observe that she was richly attired and dressed in red. On her head were several broad red belts to which were sewn shell discs. Around her neck and across her breast she wore some collars made of shells and white glass beads in a meshlike pattern.

The medicine-man got up, with the assistance of the spectators, and blew with all his strength on the body of the possessed woman. Instead of becoming quiet she sobbed harder than ever and threw herself into the arms of one of her aunts. Each time she behaved in this manner the medicine-man blew and shook his rattle. As she seemed to be about to fall into a swoon they let her sit down carefully and at her side her relatives sat speaking kindly to her as though to console or quiet her. Then the girl, her aunts and the medicine-man were covered with the same red poncho, the end of which one of the spectators kept in his hand moving it up and down. The medicine-man sang his vociferous chant and shook his bells against his patient once more.

When the poncho was removed I noticed that the woman seemed calmed. She was leaning her head against the shoulder of one of her aunts and nobody spoke. After a while she started to complain again. The medicine-man immediately shook his bells and his assistants consoled her in low voices. One of the women took away all her ornaments, folded them carefully and put them into a bag. Those present remained sitting for some time without uttering a word. The silence was broken only by the medicine-man blowing

on the sick woman. Then, as she seemed to have quited down, they started smoking and talking together. The possessed woman even accepted a cigarette. 755

Observations made by natives during the performance: The adornments are worn by the patient on behalf of the spirit who is fond of the colors. The songs and the noise of the bells are also intended to please the spirit who, charmed by the ornaments and the noise, gets quieter and leaves the patient. 755 776

During this treatment another group of about eight Indians were participating in a similar ceremony. They were dancing around a kind of improvised altar which consisted of a stick surrounded by four smaller ones forming a cross. The central stick was topped by palm leaves, the ends of which were wrapped in paper strips painted red. The four other sticks bore palm leaves painted red with the ends cut off. These sticks were inserted into wooden stands painted alternately red and black and connected in pairs by transverse rods. The whole structure was resting on some rags. A rolled poncho belonging to the medicine-man had been laid near the central stick. The ground for the ceremony had been carefully swept. According to my informant the central stick contained the injurious element which had caused the disease. That stick was supposed to be loaded with bad influences and I was warned not to touch it. 755 778

The dancers wore different costumes. Two of them had belts of ostrich feathers, and feather wreaths on their heads. In addition they wore bells and rattles on their breasts, around their loins and their ankles. Around their necks they wore necklaces of sea shells and in one hand they held a bunch of ostrich feathers. The other dancers wore their ordinary clothes with the exception of their headbands and the bells and feathers they wore on their ankles. 755 535 301

When I arrived they were dancing in a circle around the altar, from right to left, looking straight ahead. Their dance step might be defined as a jerky jog-trot. They accompanied 755 535

They accompanied
755 themselves with a very deep song, a sort of *heh, heh*, repeated
535 rhythmically but on different notes. When the dancers
[533] got tired they left the file without ceasing to sing, and after they had rested for a while they resumed their places.

The second part consisted of dancing couples. The dancers faced each other in twos, and holding each other by the arm made side jumps, holding their legs parallel but slightly apart. Always moving from right to left they went several times round the altar, from time to time spinning themselves about. When they stopped to catch their breath one of them uttered a loud cry and started to dance alone, that is to say, making side jumps with parted and stiff legs, always facing the altar, although he whirled now and then. After spinning around twice he was joined by the others. They stopped dancing, sat down and one of them took off his ornaments. Another dancer covered himself entirely with a poncho and uttered his ë ë ë, always in the same tone. The medicine-man went to get the poncho he had left near the altar, he put it on the child and started to sing and to blow on the little patient. The dancer who had covered himself with the poncho kept silent, but remained under his cover. When the ceremony was over he began to sing.

a) *Treatment of a Man Possessed by a Spirit*

755 A man was caught by a spirit at about 9 P. M. He was decorated with red belts and placed in the center of the ceremonial ground. He was given two bells and in front of him were stuck three sticks, one of which about 2 yards long was totally covered with a rather dark cloth, the other two between 2½ and 3 feet high had rags and bunches of ostrich feathers fastened to their tops. The two medicine-men, wearing only belts of ostrich feathers and holding in their hands metal rattles, were standing by the side of the patient. A little further away were two assistants (probably

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relatives of the patient) and three dancers. All wore rattles. 755

The medicine-men sang and blew on the patient, who shook the bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in one place and let their rattles jingle. The dancers then started to run from left to right and thus made a complete circle. For the second turn, when they arrived at the height of the sticks, they reversed and ran around in the opposite direction, then reversed again and so on. While the assistants were stamping their feet, singing and shaking their rattles, the medicine-men went on singing and blowing. The patient had not moved during the dance. After they had run around ten times, the dancers went to rest, smoke and talk with the assistants, but the medicine-men still blew and shook their rattles. The patient was still motionless. After a quarter of an hour the dance was resumed, this time to the accompaniment of the patient's bells and rattles which all present were shaking. All seemed to be rather happy. The ceremony was then over and they sat down to smoke. The sticks were removed and the ornaments taken off, first those of the medicine-men, then the assistants and dancers, and finally those of the patient. The patient returned quietly to his hut. 755 535

XV. Sexual Life

Before marriage nothing prevents young people from having a free sexual life. The girls paint their faces red if they have had sexual intercourse the preceding night. 836 302

In love affairs before marriage it is always the women who take the initiative. 836

If a man has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman his loins and head will ache. As for the woman, she is in no danger. 833 841

You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. 834 828

/211/

755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air 756 rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medi- 783 cine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were 796 arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone [534] whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked [292] over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war [237] shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. [302] The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/212 cont./

755 The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical
756 to the one the medicine men make heard during the treatment
783 of illnesses. The singing was given rhythm by the rattling of
796 the maracas, and, from time to time, by the sound of the bands of rattles and hoofs and blasts of the whistles. Each whistle blast marks a new stage in the performances connected with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine man, as well as his arrival or departure from a given place). The maraca was sometimes held in a threatening manner as if to repulse an invisible being; the same gesture was made by those who held ostrich feathers. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, one or another of the officiants took the ha'tax powder. One of the officiants ran behind and in front of his colleagues, dusting them from head to toe with a feather in his hand; he was assisted by another man, who made the rattles and little bells on their backs jingle. After having taken some ha'tax the officiants began to sing again, to brandish their maracas, and to make threatening gestures with them or with the feathers. Some medicine men were singing the song appropriate for their spirits, without concerning themselves with the recitative chants of their confreres.

The direct offensive against the illness followed these preliminaries: some individuals stopped out of the row, brandishing their maracas and feathers violently, and then returned to their places. Another began to throw up some dirt with his foot and was immediately followed by another who, seizing handfuls of dust, threw it in front of himself. Then one of them unsheathed his liana-cutter and began to cut the grass around him; his example was followed by almost the entire group, which threw itself into the assault on the illness. Some obstinately set upon one spot, as if they had at last driven the enemy into a corner, and beat it with redoubled blows of their liana-cutters or feather brooms, and then stamped on it as though they were burying their victim. The attack on the illness lasted rather long and was executed with great seriousness.

/212 cont./

755 756 783 796 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164] [231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image" (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness, but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mɨsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and [292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in [535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/214 cont./

755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was [533] resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the [535] rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[774] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the [776] images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

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(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

/214 cont./

755 554 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments. [292] [301] [302] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in 755 554 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women 535 were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine 755 554 men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

/215 cont./

755 The whole ceremony lasted from March 20 to March 24,
554 every day from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. and from 8 to 10 P.M.
Each day at the end of the ceremony a shot was fired to frighten the illness.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(March 26, 1933)

755 On March 26 another woman who had the same symptoms of illness as the preceding one was treated in the following manner: the site already described was used, but the flag was replaced by a large piece of red cloth with blue flowers, and a thick tuft of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the post. The staff was decorated with ritual belts. Offerings of the same type as those for the preceding ceremony were placed on the crossbars which separated the tent from the village.

755 During the entire ceremony the sick woman remained seated
535 /216/ on a bale of hay in the center of the tent; right next to her were four of the great medicine men, a little farther away about ten young dancers, and then a final circle of six or seven women. All the officiants, adorned as usual with feathers, ritual belts, and little bells, danced and sang. A passage was
[123] contrived in the separating crossbars, and, as I insisted on it, a medicine man came to tell me that this opening was intended to let the illness out; I asked him if my presence would prevent it from going out; he told me no, but that I was running the risk that it would enter me at the moment it left the body of the sick woman.

The dance was halted at a sign from the chief medicine man, and two men, taking a poncho, striped red and white, by its ends, began to dance, jumping sideways, legs open; then

/216 cont./

755 they approached the sick woman and passed the poncho over her
535 head; next they ran to the exit and shook it. They repeated this maneuver several times, then completely enveloped the woman in the poncho, and a medicine man began to rub her through the cloth. Everyone was singing but some were not dancing. After some time the poncho was taken off, carried at a running pace to the exit, and thrown outside. The dance was resumed; an assistant threw some water on the ground, and the chief medicine man then stopped the dance again. He sat next to the sick woman, covering himself completely with a large black blanket, and began to speak with the illness; during this time the man who was watering the ground carried up a bucket of water and, with the help of a medicine man, washed the face, head, and body of the sick woman, who was turned with her feet toward the passage made in the crossbars, and a path was traced with water from her feet to the passage. The chief medicine man got up and the dance was resumed with renewed
302 ardor. During this dance the assistant moistened the shoulders of the male dancers, while an old man painted the faces of the women red, giving them two circles on the cheek bones and a streak along the nose. At the same time one medicine man blew on the sick woman and another covered her face with a red cloth. At the end of a certain time the sick woman lay down, the dance continued, taking on a threatening character, and then suddenly the people appeared satisfied, having undoubtedly obtained a momentary success. The ceremony stopped and was resumed after an hour.

Note

64 According to the medicine men with whom I had a chance
32 to talk about these two sick women, they were suffering from "sickness in the chest," /217/ easily explicable by a sharp atmospheric drop of almost 25° in 24 hours.

/217 cont./

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [55] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned with what was going on. After an interruption, during which [213] everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [152] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

/217 cont./

Notes

753 1. This woman, who was about seven months pregnant,
755 continued to carry enormous loads of dry wood, which provoked
843 the illness to which she succumbed.

761 2. According to the opinion of the village, the death was due to the fact that she had become pregnant before her first child knew how to feed itself.

Plate VIII

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A. The medicine men sing to the rhythm of the maracas.

B. Threats by the medicine men; a whistle announcing a transformation.

[End Plate 1]

Plate IX

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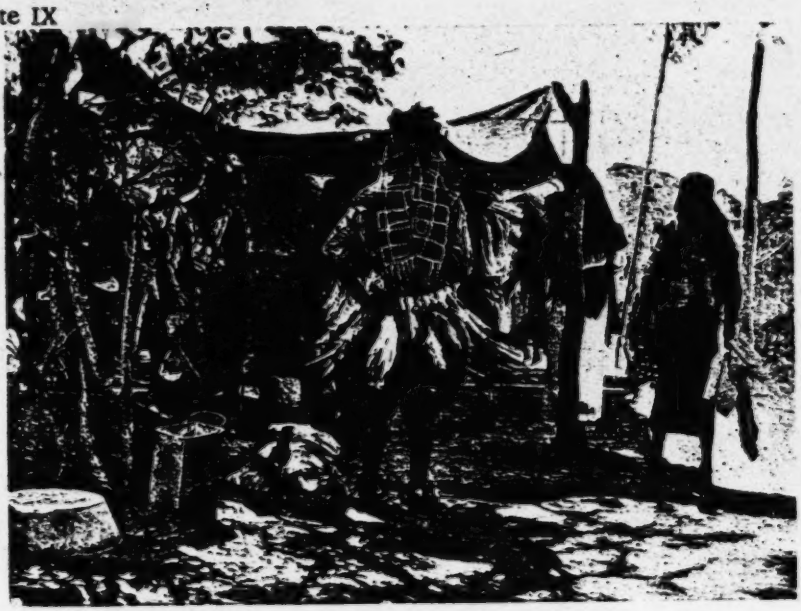

[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]

arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances towards a Spanish woman. . . .

"Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain respect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

●756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

164 "A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts 763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in 764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

768 "On returning from the funeral all the equipment which belonged to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he [764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

765 "The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new
791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance,
776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a
846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

●756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which
[753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

● 756 or dies from purely natural causes. So when a person becomes sick or has any pain, the sorcerer is immediately called to take away the pain or to restore health. And let no one think that the sorcerer (witchdoctor) must feel the pulse of the sick person or make him stick out his tongue or confuse him and his relatives with the many questions with which our doctors confuse us—no, this would seem to them to be an admission of ignorance and furthermore, highly impertinent; nor do they cudgel their brains to find the cause of the infirmity or care whether there be herbs or special remedies to combat it—not at all, for it would only be a waste of time. Their method of effecting a cure is more simple. The patient having said that he feels pain in such and such a place, the witchdoctor does nothing other than to place his hands on the affected part, but he places them together and half-closed, in such a way that they are in the shape of a hollow vessel, exactly as when boys, with half-closed hands wish to imitate the sound of a trumpet or horn. And with their hands in that way, they begin to blow through [605] them with all the lung power at their command, accompanying the puffing with groans and howls, and persevering in this for hours on end, repeating the ceremony with greater or less frequency according to the state of the invalid and the possibility of payment for their work. Those who have nothing must yet give something to the witchdoctor, and those who have possessions must determine to give all of them to him, and they do so. Some however appear to doubt or at least to mistrust the witchdoctor's ability, for although they will give him all he asks for beforehand, they force him to return everything if his treatment is not efficacious. The one who is most fortunate in the recovery of his patients is the one who acquires most prestige, and he makes a good living. If the patient gets worse, and the witchdoctors see that he is going to die they usually declare him beyond recovery and abandon him in order not to lose prestige, and make excuse as to the incurability of the disease by claiming that some more powerful evil power is acting against him.

[763] Often, if the witchdoctor who states that the patient is past hope is of some fame, the relatives of the patient will take the sick man out to the burial grounds while he is still alive, will dig his grave, choke him to death and bury him. When, on the other hand, one of their leaders or some person of great influence or having many relatives or who is generally well liked becomes seriously ill or is close to death, then there is usually a consultation or general gathering of all the

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●756 witchdoctors of the vicinity, who never declare the man beyond re-
554 covery but bend their every effort in making a great show of their ridiculous and childish practices in order to make death keep away. Gathered, then, in the invalid's hut, they stand about him at some little distance in a semicircle and do not take their eyes off him but observe his every movement with care. They begin to blow and gesture with their hands, now forcefully and with verve, now slowly and softly according as they see that the patient seems more fatigued or gets back some of his strength; and all this in order to pretend that they see death approaching and are trying to chase it away. In the
[533] same manner they begin to sing in base, funereal tones an air similar to a continuous harsh howling, and, being guided by the condition of the invalid they modify their expressions, gestures and tone of voice. The stricken person for his part always tries, by means of his fatigue, his cries or moans, his frightened eyes and perturbed expression to let the others know what he is feeling and the state he considers himself to be in; and the witchdoctors, following these obvious signs, gesticulate more or less, blow and howl with greater or less softness [606] or loudness, come close and hurl themselves wildly towards the invalid or gently fall back a short distance. When it seems that the sick man is about to die they come at a bound so close to him, heightening their gestures to such a pitch and howling so unceasingly and in such broken, forced and hoarse tones, with eyes so wide open and fearful and with so many expressions of terror, that anyone could easily be led to believe that they do in fact see death in the guise of some deformed and terrible figure and that they wish to frighten it, make it flee or seize it. All this is done so seriously and naturally that no one would suspect them of perpetrating a hoax or deceiving; but the fact is that even if the invalid were still able to live for a while, terror would soon finish him off."

"The witchdoctors are also believed to have the power to drive away and make disappear plagues and calamities such as smallpox, which wreaks havoc among them; the lack of water or its excess and other things. To this end the witchdoctors meet, go off a little way from the camp and, seated upon the ground, like so many Jeremiahs, begin to sing their lamentations, without words of course, accompanying
[534] the sad song with the choc-que-choc produced by the coming together of small stones placed in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some [262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat [263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of [262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and [756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black, [165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of 302 [165] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

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that the a'hót is really answering, not realizing that it is a ventriloqual trick.

I have remarked a number of times in these notes that the witch doctors are the mediators between the a'hóts and men, but they are also, in addition to this priestly function, doctors, -- in fact they are priests by reason of their being doctors. [756]

The association of religion with medicine seems to be a constant factor among primitive peoples and also among the uneducated classes of the present civilization. This fact provides fuel for reflection of a philosophic-historical type. According to historians there is every indication that it was already present among the American peoples and even Oviedo mentions coming upon it [204] in the island of Hispaniola. Robertson, that sober and wise historian of America explains the phenomenon succinctly when he says: "Superstition in its primitive form had its roots in man's natural impatience to free himself from a present evil and did not grow out of fear of the evils which awaited him in the life to come. So it is that its origin stems from medicine and not from religion."

I have no indication that the superstition of these Indians goes together with any cruel practice, nor have I read anything to the effect that this is the case among the other American savages.

The luxury of cruelty seems to be the exclusive prerogative of religions, among them being those primitive ones of Perú and, especially, Mexico.

Chapter X

The Cult of Graves

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The Indians practice a "grave cult," and it can be asserted that they have always done so.

Near the city of Santiago del Estero I have seen their burial mounds and the earthen jars they contain.

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man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

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In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a'hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

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Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

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I, who used to stay up very late, both to do my stint at guard duty and to take advantage of a few uninterrupted hours for study, used to take up a stand close to them. At first my presence there made them keep quiet, but later on, taking heart at my reiterated hiss tzilataj ("very pretty"), and seeing that I did not make fun of them, they continued in spite of my being there.

At last, after twenty days, the sick man got well.

One of the very strange treatments is the one which they ad- 752
minister to those who have been poisoned by a sting ray, which fish can administer an extremely painful and sometimes mortal wound. This treatment consists in placing the offended part, which is usually the ankle, over the smoke given off from the cracks in burning palo santo [lignum vital --Translator], which is a resinous wood, after which a woman in her menstruating period is to sit astride it. I have been assured by whites who have made the experiment that it is a very efficacious remedy.

Every treatment for sickness or wounds however needs, if it 756●
is to have any virtue, to be in the hands of a witch doctor (male), or at least in those of a female witch doctor.

Not everyone can be a witch doctor, and just as the members of this profession make their patients pay according to the seriousness of the malady and the means of the individual, either in skins, animals, food or other things, so also does this profession have its seamy side in which quarrels and deception occur. In addition to this and in order to get greater prestige they shroud themselves in mystery and the supernatural. So it is that in the village of Granadero the Indians, speaking about a young man who was already embarked on this career, said that as a boy he had vanished and then reappeared after two years which he had spent underground among the a'hot, these a'hot having carried him off in order to instruct him in the art and imbue him with the virtues of doctor and priest.

While on the subject of these frauds I must tell of an occasion 123
when things almost took a bad turn for me. I went to call on 755
Chief Granadero who was just recovering from a long illness. I had with me, as is my custom, a pocket inkwell and a pen. Granadero noticed these things and asked me what they were. I, thinking to please him flourished the inkwell and pen and set about writing, but saw in a moment that Granadero had become furious and menacing -- his doctors had just cured him of the a'hot which

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba S/12

his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyim*, by his *peyák nŏtta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyim* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aitták is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aitták is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aitták talák*, i.e. »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aitták talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aitták talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

M 382 789

Among the *M a t a c o*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruháh*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *oväittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

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M [751]

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets.[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

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[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich. *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 231.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

He can be near the Pilcomayo[1] or in the bush without losing his way.

To meet a *welán* means death. Only the medicine-men are allowed to speak to them without danger. If a person is stolen by a *welán* he will become a medicine-man for he understands the ways and the language of the *welán*. The *welán* appear only at night. In order to ask them questions it is necessary to apply to a medicine-man who knows their language. The medicine-man enters a *yuchan* tree, the *welán* blows on him and the medicine-man in turn blows upon the people. By night the *welán* come to visit the medicine-men.

When a *welán* takes a person away that person can no longer speak and does not wish to remain at home any longer. He must be sung over for a month, at the end of which time he becomes a medicine-man.

55. Origin of Disease

A man was caught by a *welán* who made him a chief *welán*. The man who had become a *welán* changed his mother into one also. One day a man died and the people charged the *welán*-man with his death. They invited the *welán* to visit them under the pretence of presenting him with a sheep. The man accepted the invitation but before going he told his mother he would probably not return again. He went to the others who were glad to have him accept their invitation. They gave him a sheep, asking him to eat it immediately, but the *welán* refused and said that he would like to eat it upon reaching his home. So he went taking the animal with him. The men who had planned to kill him ran ahead and hid themselves on the path he was following. When they heard the bleating of the sheep they shot at him and the *welán*-man was mortally wounded. Feeling how deep the point of the arrow had penetrated he

[1] The big swamps formed by the Pilcomayo are real labyrinths in which one may become lost.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house.

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region.

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death.

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire.

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms.

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see.

156 To pass through this darkness the medicine-man changes into a species of owl (*sinalčǫ́*). This is a bird who travels 773 by night and whose eyes are like lanterns. In this disguise he is able to fly in the dark. After crossing the dark area he changes himself into a (white aquatic bird with red-circled eyes. When he arrives at the Big Fire's house he changes himself into a *carancho* and in this last disguise he calls on the Big Fire. They get acquainted and are very friendly. Later the *carancho* changes himself into a beautiful and well dressed woman. Big Fire is on good terms with the beautiful woman. Soon she becomes a man again. Big Fire asks the medicine-man if there is much bush in his country. The medicine-man takes care not to mention straw, bushes or trees, otherwise Big Fire will eat them up. The medicine-man goes home.

III. The Medicine-men

156 A man who wants to become a medicine-man must eat raw dog flesh. Ordinarily the candidate slays a young pup eats its flesh, and buries its head and skin very carefully.

156 Medicine dances are taught the prospective medicine-men by demons or spirits who give them their power. The *welán* 776 are the spirits who are the most inclined to instruct men in the art of magic. The ordinary method in this procedure is as follows: The soul of a man is ravished by a *welán* and shut into a tree. There the man's soul remains captive and the *welán* teaches it the language of the spirit, then the *welán* blows on the prospective medicine-man and he thus acquires the power to treat sick people who come to him, using the same method. Medicine-men are constantly in touch with the spirits. They meet them at night and talk with them. The spirits have a stick called *laḳaaLoi* which contains their souls and this they give to their friends, the medicine-men.

156 Some women may acquire medical knowledge, but the Indians never consider them as smart as male doctors.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

Young men seen dancing while an old medicine-man is performing a treatment are practicing the fundamentals of the art before becoming full fledged doctors. Not all succeed for the trials laid on the medicine-man's soul during the journey to the spirits are hard and many give up.

When a medicine-man performs his ceremonies, or as the natives say »*dice misa*», he changes himself into a white bird called *yulo* in Spanish. The medicine-man is said to transform himself into a bird, but when asked how such a change occurs without the body of the magician undergoing a change, the natives explained that only the soul of the man becomes a bird. In order to send his soul abroad in the shape of a bird the medicine-man plays for a long time on a flute made of the bone of a *yulo* bird. By so doing he creates an intimate contact between himself and the bird, but the real transformation occurs only after he has snuffed a powder called *hatax*. This intoxicating powder is prepared from the seeds of the *sebil* (*hatek*), a very common tree which grows abundantly in the Chaco and in the north of Argentina. The seeds are gathered, parched and pounded in a wooden mortar. The powder is exposed to the air a long time and then put in a calabash that has been used by medicine-men during their ceremonies. When the medicine-man has changed himself or his soul into a bird he goes into the sky »like an airplane» and calls on Rain to make him fall. To meet Rain he must enter his house through a very narrow door.

Just before sowing time the medicine-men go up into the sky to get rain. Without their aid the crop would dry up. Thus at the village Km. 600, all the cattle would have died had it not been for the Matako medicine-men who helped the white men by calling on the rain.

Old people say that once there was a heavy rain and some children became frightened and the Rain took them up into the heavens. A medicine-man in the form of a bird went up to bring them back.

756 The medicine-men who have snuffed the powder of *sebil* seeds (*natax*) and gone into a trance see everything, especially the disease demons. They also see bad medicine-men. When in this state they may also call on the spirits of the dead (*āhat*). Such visits to the dead may sometimes help to cure a patient, for if it is the spirit of a dead person who caused the sickness, he can also take it away. A medicine-man has to pay the disease demon when he cures somebody and so he in turn charges the patient. The fees of a medicine-man are extremely high. My informant Pedro, for instance, has paid a poncho (value of 18 pesos) for being cured of snake bite. If the patient dies, the medicine-man is not entitled to a fee, even a very small one. However, his professional fame is not lessened.

If a medicine-man has not succeeded in effecting a cure, another one is called in, but then the task is more difficult as the disease has lost its temper. It is also important to call the right specialist. Certain doctors have acquired fame for curing particular diseases. Snake bites are usually treated by special medicine-men.

756 When medicine-men perform magical rites, a very big
787 tree covered with green leaves, similar to those of a palm
761 tree and also extremely thick, appears before them. This tree always emits a noise which only medicine-men perceive. If this same tree appears to the medicine-men without leaves and quite dry, it presages death for him. He then knows that he has only one year to live. Through magic the medicine-man knows when his last moment is near. He has only to let the tree come. When his time arrives the magic tree comes down from the sky, stops at a certain height above the ground near the medicine-man, who throws himself on the ground, and as soon as he has breathed his last the tree gets up and bursts »like a bomb«. It is the end
[775] for the medicine-man and the tree. The soul of the dead medicine-man goes to the sky to the place where the tree had been.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

The medicine-man always knows beforehand when the red grasshopper (*čol*) will come. The striped grasshopper (*talesai*) lives inside a kind of very big gourd (*wotsotáx*). The grasshoppers belong to a master who sends them everywhere. During the summer they are out but at the first cold weather, they return to their squash.

Each year in the month of August, the medicine-men have a ceremony in order to go and see the *lachiwana* bees to ask them to come down to earth once more. For this event the medicine-men snuff *hatax* powder. They go up where the mother of all bees lives. She is as large as a house. To reach her the medicine-men transform themselves into *aguaraguasu* (*Canis jubatus*). The mother of the bees requires presents since she is afraid that by burning the old prairies her children might get burned too.

If someone speaks ill of a medicine-man, the latter's familiar spirit may enter the offender's body and thus avenge the insult. The soul of the medicine-man (*táxumit*) is ferocious. When the medicine-man is at odds with someone, his *táxumit* inflicts illness on the person with whom he is angry and no one except the medicine-man is able to cure the victim. It is wise therefore to stay on good terms with medicine-men.

IV. The Sun and the Medicine-men

The medicine-men may go and visit the Sun, Moon, the Night, the Rain and the Big Fire to make friends with them. During these trips they always go in gangs led by an older man who is expert in the difficult art of overcoming the numerous obstacles they meet on the way. He is the spiritual father of the younger medicine-men. If wandering medicine-men meet those of other villages, they fight and the spirits of those wounded or killed during the trips will be sick or will die on earth, for all that happens to the spirit must inevitably happen to the body. Medicine-men never fight on earth, and only while under the influence of *hatax* do

756 they fight in the sky. Upon awakening a vanquished medicine-man informs his family of his defeat.

Medicine-men like to visit the Sun for he is like a peddler, 756 he knows everything. To protect the entrance to his abode 821 the Sun has made a slippery trail. Those who step on it slip down and break their necks. The Sun gets the dead and eats them, generally broiled or stewed. The medicine-men know how to escape this danger. They transform themselves into wax and thus stick to the trail, crossing it without running the risk of being devoured by the Sun. The Sun closes the entrance to his abode with a sort of trap. This trap consists of two beams which knock against each other and crush those who try to get between them. Medicine-men who have had no experience get crushed. Those who are skillful transform themselves into humming birds (*cinax*) and thus pass quickly between the beams before they have time to close together. Behind the beams the sun has stretched traps. The medicine-men without experience get caught by their thumbs in these traps. The Sun gets them and kills them. Great medicine-men change into eels and creep between the meshes, thus escaping.

The Sun's abode is surrounded by a palisade of cacti with only one small window. The medicine-men can fly over it if they become humming birds, or they can change into rodents (*sičúm*, a rodent with a flat head) and dig a cave under it. The Sun is very surprised when medicine-men come to him in spite of beams, traps and fences. He goes to his traps and is quite amazed when he does not find anybody in them. When this occurs he has no food. If the soul of a medicine-man is eaten by the Sun, the medicine-man who has stayed on earth dies. When a medicine-man arrives at the Sun's house, after having overcome all the obstacles, he is welcomed by the Sun, who is no longer angry, and in order for the sorcerer to come nearer, the Sun turns colder. Otherwise it would be impossible to approach within 500 yards of him because he burns everything. The Sun asks the medi-

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

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angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [824] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a supernatural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made [278] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes [824] add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranãs" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

●756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[362] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing

Magic

789 609 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

/211/

755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [292] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/212 cont./

755 The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical
756 to the one the medicine men make heard during the treatment
783 of illnesses. The singing was given rhythm by the rattling of
796 the maracas, and, from time to time, by the sound of the bands of rattles and hoofs and blasts of the whistles. Each whistle blast marks a new stage in the performances connected with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine man, as well as his arrival or departure from a given place). The maraca was sometimes held in a threatening manner as if to repulse an invisible being; the same gesture was made by those who held ostrich feathers. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, one or another of the officiants took the ha'tax powder. One of the officiants ran behind and in front of his colleagues, dusting them from head to toe with a feather in his hand; he was assisted by another man, who made the rattles and little bells on their backs jingle. After having taken some ha'tax the officiants began to sing again, to brandish their maracas, and to make threatening gestures with them or with the feathers. Some medicine men were singing the song appropriate for their spirits, without concerning themselves with the recitative chants of their confreres.

The direct offensive against the illness followed these preliminaries: some individuals stopped out of the row, brandishing their maracas and feathers violently, and then returned to their places. Another began to throw up some dirt with his foot and was immediately followed by another who, seizing handfuls of dust, threw it in front of himself. Then one of them unsheathed his liana-cutter and began to cut the grass around him; his example was followed by almost the entire group, which threw itself into the assault on the illness. Some obstinately set upon one spot, as if they had at last driven the enemy into a corner, and beat it with redoubled blows of their liana-cutters or feather brooms, and then stamped on it as though they were burying their victim. The attack on the illness lasted rather long and was executed with great seriousness.

/212 cont./

755 756 783 796 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164] [231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
●756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mɨsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by
naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/217 cont./

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [55] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned [213] with what was going on. After an interruption, during which everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [152] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

Plate VIII

292
755
756

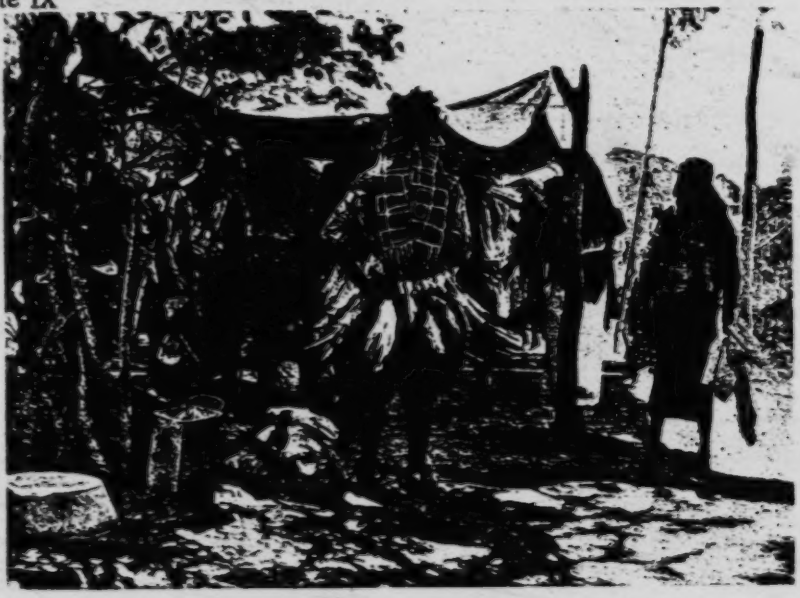
A. The medicine men sing to the rhythm of the maracas.

B. Threat by the medicine men; a whistle announcing a transformation.

[End Plate 1]

Plate IX

755
756
291
292



[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./
771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
● 756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
167 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
177 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
131 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They
197 occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
177 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464]

In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101

These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197

They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224

Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756]

They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI17

T
763 ly refers to a custom already abandoned by the Tobas. It reminds us
766 of a similar custom of the Choroti who, as I have stated have been in the
171 habit of killing old, decrepit men with an arrow-shot in the heart to prevent them from reappearing as evil death-bringing spirits. The fact that, as Mr. Grubb relates, the Lenguas have been in the habit of burying hopelessly sick patients alive shows that such cruel customs have been wide-spread among the Chaco tribes. Its motives, as I have pointed out before, [1]) are to be sought in superstitious fear. Among all Indians the spirits of old men — especially those of medicine-men and sorcerers — are particularly feared. If such a person is allowed to die a natural death, this means that the evil spirit who caused the sickness has wholly taken possession of his soul, identified himself with it, and changed the departed Indian into an evil, destructive demon. This, according to the idea of the Indians, can be prevented by giving such a patient a violent death before he is killed by the disease-demon. [2])

M
751 Lastly, I may remark that there is not in the manipulations of the
755 medicine-man much that has the character of what we may call a »natural» cure, the only operations likely to give real relief being the massage of the sick spot and the suction, which in fact is sometimes so strong that it almost amounts to cupping. Various drugs and herbs are indeed used by the Chaco Indians for curative purposes and are not seldom alleged to have really healing effects [3]). These, however, are not exclusively used by the medicine-men; most elderly men seem to know about them. In the treatment of the professional medicine-men these remedies, curiously enough, seem to play but a subordinate part, magical conjurations being regarded as more important. — When a patient recovers in consequence of a medicine-man's »cure», as is not seldom the case, the phenomenon must first of all be ascribed to self-suggestion on the part of the patient, and the importance of this kind of »psychical treatment», in the case of primitive peoples, must not be underrated.

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[1]) See above, p. 112.

[2]) See below, p. 191.

[3]) Most »natural» remedies of the Chaco Indians are used for outward application, and they generally consist of decoctions made from certain leaves and roots. There is not much hygiene to be traced in the therapeutics of these Indians, nor do I believe that their remedies have much healing effect.

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of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *ăxǫ̆lĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

inch; there the punctures are to be made until the blood flows. If a first treatment proves insufficient it must be repeated until loss of blood relieves congestion and eases the limb.

To stop a hemorrhage one must burn an old hat or some old rag and put the ashes on the wound. When one is pricked by a thorn one must suck the blood to prevent inflammation.

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123
had been tormenting him for so long, and had extracted from his 755
body several pens and a pencil, under guise of which, they said, the a'hot had been harming him.

[211] The women seem to be extraordinarily able as mid- 844
wives. 759

With singular ability they wait for the critical moment of labor and then, raising and holding the mother-to-be they shake her and keep uttering their customary exorcisms until they are successful in their endeavors.

However, if one wishes to be in on an interesting spectacle 755
one must see an invalid getting the full treatment in a village.

One evening while I was camped near a tribe I became curious on hearing a great sound of voices and the repercussion of strong blows on the ground. As my relations with these Indians was of the very best I did not hesitate to go to see what was afoot. In the midst of the village, in a sort of central square, I saw a circle of black figures illuminated fitfully by the blaze of the fires; they were the squaws and men who were sitting on their heels smoking in silence. In the center of the circle, in a space of about eight meters, four robust men with ostrich feathers and timbrels at their ankles, wrists, waists and on their heads were running back and forth, with their hands raised, gesticulating wildly and rattling some gourds half filled with seeds which added to the noise. They ran about singing and howling, and one could see that they were panting and covered with sweat. They would straighten out their legs and pound the ground with the whole sole of their feet, and as they did this they would raise their voices in a mad, desperate way, with their arms on high, heads to one side and body curved over.

Alternately two of them would stop, crouch, move their heads rapidly from right to left and up and down, howl and blow and spit on the backs, legs, heads and mouths of two invalids who were seated in their midst.

The two sick men were suffering terribly from the a'hots which had entered their bodies in the form of rheumatic pains, and the [753]
witch doctors were attempting to drive them out with their infernal dance. This, it was understood, they would be unable to do until they managed, by means of their unbridled racing about and thumping, to tire and intimidate the a'hots who, with evil intent

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the mother, these are at once set down as the operation of evil spirits. The parents, especially the father, are released from the restriction laid upon them by custom as soon as the child is assumed to have become independent of the physical and mental constitution of its parents.

Among the Chaco Indians, there does not exist any ceremonies corresponding to our baptism, but a *name* is always given the new-born child. The Chaco Indians name their children after animals, birds, reptiles (for instance Bird, Alligator, Lizard), or after bodily peculiarities observed in the child (for instance: Tsihnilak, »Paunchy», a Choroti name), but the names seem on the whole to be given at random and not with the same discrimination which is the rule among some Indians of tropical South America. There is however one peculiar feature to be noted in this respect: the reluctance generally displayed by the Indians to mention their real names. I very rarely heard the Indians using each other's names in their daily conversations, and if one wished to find out the name of a certain Indian, this was as a rule extremely difficult. When a Choroti, a Mataco, or a Toba went to the settlements of the whites to work, he usually assumed a special European name for that time. Such names they never had any objection to mentioning, but they were extremely unwilling to tell me their proper native names. Only on certain occasions — for instance, at the drinking-feasts when all were in high spirits and very good friends — did it happen that the Indians told me one another's names. The native name, received in early childhood, is the real name and is to a certain degree taboo. To reveal it is a perilous thing, especially if the individual *himself* does it. It is to put oneself wholly in the power of an unknown stranger and wilfully to expose oneself to mysterious dangers.

As we shall find later on, the names of the *dead* are particularly taboo.

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ness and misfortune. Thus the Choroti expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *möhsek* (spirit), and they therefore generally kill the child at once. The Mataco call their evil spirits *aitták* and regard a monster as an *aitták* personified. Similarly the Tobas believe that a sick child is possessed by a demon (*peyák*), or is itself such a demon, and owing to the close connection which there is between the child and its parents, this may entail unfortunate consequences for the parents also, nay, for the whole tribe.

Father Cardús relates that when among the Tobas a woman dies in child-birth, the new-born child is buried alive with its mother's body [1]). I do not believe that such a custom is practised by the Tobas of to-day, but it may well have existed formerly. A woman who dies in childbirth is always regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear, since the accident is explained as an operation of evil spirits to which the woman has fallen a victim. But the new-born child with its mother forms, as it were, one single personality; consequently the child also is regarded as being possessed. Besides, a sucking child which is bereft of its mother is also left without nutrition since, according to Indian ideas, a new-born babe can only be nourished with the milk of its own mother, and would thus die in any case.

We may of course also assume that practical considerations have led the Indians to infanticide. The Indians understand that a sickly or deformed child has scarcely any chance of developing into a strong man and a useful member of society. In the hard struggle for existence under which the Indian lives it may even be merciful to destroy him. I believe however that such considerations play only a subordinate part in the custom of infanticide, which must first of all be explained by superstition.

The same custom prevails with regard to *twins*. Among all tribes the second is generally killed. The birth of twins is among all Pilcomayo tribes looked upon as an unnatural and most ominous thing, since the Indians consider that one man cannot become the father of two children at once. The second, consequently, must be the offspring either of another man or of an evil spirit. Besides, the Indians say that a woman has not sufficient milk to nourish two babes at the same time, and from this point of view also twins are regarded as unlucky. The Indian woman, who has to work hard, is anxious not to bear more children than she is able to nourish and to take care of. In a Choroti family three or four

[1]) Cardús *op. cit.* p. 263.

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776 The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared
761 because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

753 Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance,
776 the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút teláh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is
[755] possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyá*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamsa* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mata-
[752] co for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by
776 a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural
821 phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

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Chapter XVIII.

Ideas of future life and funeral ceremonies.

Although the Chaco Indians certainly do not believe in the »immortality of the soul» — an expression often abused, especially by Christian missionaries — they all believe in the continued existence of the soul after death. Their ideas about the future life are much the same as those found among most primitive peoples. Man is, as it were, a double being; in the visible body there resides an ethereal shadow-like being, mostly invisible, which is its life-essence and the particular seat of which is the chest. That the soul is thought of as being in its nature a shadow-like form appears especially from the name given it by the Tobas: *kadepakál*, which means »our (*i. e.* the human) shadow». The Choroti usually speak of »the dead one» (*yál*) whereas the Mataco call the soul *kasitah*, a word the etymology of which is obscure. When man is asleep this ethereal being is believed to have left its abode for the moment, and what he experiences in his dreams is believed to be really experienced by the soul during its wanderings. When he awakes it returns to the body. In death, on the other hand, the soul has left its abode for ever. This is the work of the evil demon who entered into the body causing disease and death.

Leaving its bodily frame at the moment of death, the soul is set free to an active and independent existence and changed into a supernatural being of whom the Indians as a rule stand in great fear. According to the ideas they have of the existence and activity of the soul after its separation from the body, the mysterious spirit at first hovers about its old abode, the dead body, and the house where the departed lived, being then particularly dangerous to the surviving relatives. The danger is greatest before the corpse has been buried. The Indians also fancy that the soul follows the body to the grave, and their burial

[p.189]

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house. 775

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region. [772]

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death. [787]

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire. [761]

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms. [821]

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see. 756 773

156 The medicine-men who have snuffed the powder of *seòil* seeds (*ńatax*) and gone into a trance see everything, especially the disease demons. They also see bad medicine-men. When in this state they may also call on the spirits of the dead (*āhat*). Such visits to the dead may sometimes help to cure a patient, for if it is the spirit of a dead person who caused the sickness, he can also take it away. A medicine-man has to pay the disease demon when he cures somebody and so he in turn charges the patient. The fees of a medicine-man are extremely high. My informant Pedro, for instance, has paid a poncho (value of 18 pesos) for being cured of snake bite. If the patient dies, the medicine-man is not entitled to a fee, even a very small one. However, his professional fame is not lessened.

If a medicine-man has not succeeded in effecting a cure, another one is called in, but then the task is more difficult as the disease has lost its temper. It is also important to call the right specialist. Certain doctors have acquired fame for curing particular diseases. Snake bites are usually treated by special medicine-men.

156b 787 ●761 When medicine-men perform magical rites, a very big tree covered with green leaves, similar to those of a palm tree and also extremely thick, appears before them. This tree always emits a noise which only medicine-men perceive. If this same tree appears to the medicine-men without leaves and quite dry, it presages death for him. He then knows that he has only one year to live. Through magic the medicine-man knows when his last moment is near. He has only to let the tree come. When his time arrives the magic tree comes down from the sky, stops at a certain height above the ground near the medicine-man, who throws himself on the ground, and as soon as he has breathed his last the tree gets up and bursts »like a bomb«. It is the end for the medicine-man and the tree. The soul of the dead [775] medicine-man goes to the sky to the place where the tree had been.

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IX. Storms

When a storm approaches with rain and thunder, little children's ears are to be covered each time the thunder crashes, otherwise Rain would take them under his arm and carry them away to his house. When such a thing happens, the child's body, which has remained on earth, becomes lean and white and all the food he takes is of no use. He visibly pines away, and it is not likely that a medicine-man can cure him. He will finally die without the cause of his death being known. The rain cannot do anything to grown-ups or big children, for it has not the strength to carry them away, but it can harm menstruating women who happen to be out during a storm. Then they get very feeble.

X. Shooting Stars

Shooting stars foretell the death of someone. Meteors are stones thrown by the rain in order to fell the *quebracho*.

XI. Treatment of Snake Bites

When a serpent bites a man, it goes into the wound and climbs up in his body. When a man's foot is bitten by a-snake the leg must be pressed starting from the thigh, squeezing down to the place where he has been bitten. In so doing, the snake which has already had time to enter the leg, is obliged to go down into the big toe where it rolls itself up, tired. The operation lasts from evening to dawn and when the sun appears the snake gets cramped and vanishes under the ground. Once the snake is out the medicine-man has to suck the wound, for the departing snake has left its skin inside the body of the victim. The patient is completely cured only when the last piece of skin left by the snake has been removed. Otherwise he remains sick, has a headache and gets thinner and thinner.

If the progress of the snake inside the body cannot be stopped, the animal may go up into the head and blind the victim. It also goes to the heart and after repeated bites

/217 cont./

Notes

753 1. This woman, who was about seven months pregnant,
755 continued to carry enormous loads of dry wood, which provoked
843 the illness to which she succumbed.

[61] 2. According to the opinion of the village, the death was due to the fact that she had become pregnant before her first child knew how to feed itself.

Funeral Rites

763 If the eyes of a dying person become fixed in a stare, his soul cannot escape and his agony is prolonged. That is why the Matacos cover the faces of the dying with a piece of cloth and knot it about the throat. This cloth often contributes to accelerate the end by asphyxiating them. Their rush to bury the dead is so great that it sometimes results in the interment of persons who are still alive.

764 The widow, her head shaved, is isolated in a corner of the hut, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain, or else she is placed in a small annex attached to the hut.

● [162] Immediately after the death of a young man who had committed suicide in the village of San Patricio, his mother crouched on the earth, placed the dead boy's head on her knees and began to grieve for him, saying repeatedly the word "yos," "yos" (my son, my son). The father beat a drum, day and night in accompaniment of a dirge in which the expression "yos," "yos," was much in evidence. A group of women, under the direction of the mother who was shaking a rattle [18] executed a dance which consisted of little jumpy steps near the place where the corpse had been placed before the burial.

587] A widower or a widow may marry again two or three months after their spouse's demise. The women excuse themselves by saying. "I had to eat, I need someone who will clothe me."

Burial up in a tree, as described by Enrique Palavecino, used at one time to be very common in the middle region of the Bemejo.

Belief in the Reality of Dreams

787 842 The missionary Barbrooke Grubb has given numerous examples of the belief of the Lengua Indians in the reality of dreams. I have myself collected a good many examples of this belief among the Tobas and Pilagas. Here is an anecdote which illustrates this attitude among the Matacos. A girl from the village of San Patricio woke up weeping one beautiful morning. When asked about the cause of her sorrow, she answered that she had dreamed that she had had sexual relations with a young man and was afraid of becoming pregnant... (Footnote: Sent from the Smithsonian Institute of Washington by the author, a corresponding member. Translated from the French by Dr. Fernando Márquez Miranda, also a member).

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586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognized is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

[587] Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can [589] only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will [682] always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

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estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

762 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

[797] [115]

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

[824] 762 251 252

The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

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and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizziness increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

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naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered. According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

Third case. A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was discovered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

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forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary

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together with his people but, after some difficulties with his young wife, took poison and died.

Ninth case. Martin, a 15 year old boy, was the kitchen boy of the mission and had always been a cheerful and willing worker. One day he told the missionary that he was married. From that time on, he looked troubled and became restless. Later the missionary was told that Martin did not like the girl with whom he lived but that the girl, who had a forceful character, would not permit him to leave her. Finally, depressed and broken, Martin told the missionary about his unhappy situation. He was advised to separate from his wife and determined to do so. Despite this resolution, he remained with her; to excuse himself he explained that every time he wanted to tell her to go away, "he would become weak all over and could say nothing". His own words were, "Then I go all weak and sleep with her".

The quarreling continued and things went from bad to worse. About this time Martin and his brother killed a cow that belonged to a white settler. The missionary, of course, learned about the theft. Knowing that the missionary would be angry, Martin left the kitchen and refused to return. In a state of utter dejection, he took poison but was saved by the missionary.

Two or three days later, during a quarrel over some meat, his elder brother struck him in the face. Angry and humiliated by the blow, the boy went to the forest and secretly ate sachasandia. In the evening he returned to the missionary who only noticed that one of his eyes was swollen and badly bruised. He was more depressed than ever and sighed on and on. Finally he took the missionary's hand, said goodby and, with another sigh, went home. When the missionary was called to his bedside, it was too late. He died the same night.

Martin had re-married a few days before his death. His new wife was a nice girl of about 14 years. She discovered his condition early in the night and tried to persuade his father to fetch the missionary. The old man slept on and paid no attention. When it was already too late, the boy's mother asked for help, but the father remained indifferent throughout. The moment the boy was dead, his mother squatted down, laid his head on her knees and started the death wailing, "My son, my son, my son...". The other women joined in the lament. The next day the father beat his drum without stopping.

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Tenth case. This attempt at suicide was made by an old woman of some 50 years, who had grown children and grandchildren. One of her sons was Martin, whose death was described above.

One afternoon, when she had mourned for her son for many days, she took poison. Evidently she was very tired and depressed. Her

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family suspected that she had taken the fruit although she showed none of the usual symptoms. One of her sons asked the missionary for help. As soon as she realized she had been discovered, she jumped up and vehemently denied having taken poison. The son insisted that she had and that she was trying to deceive her family and the missionary. To make sure that she was in no danger, the missionary decided to give her an emetic. The old woman struggled violently, throwing off everyone who approached her; only after an hour's strenuous fight was she overcome and forced to take the purge. Of course her stomach contained large quantities of the poison, which she had timed very carefully to take effect early in the morning when everyone would be deep in sleep and, therefore, unaware of her condition. Had it not been for her son's persistence, she undoubtedly would have been found dead the next day. Her husband, who was devoted to her, appeared to be quite unconcerned and, had the matter been left with him, would have done nothing to save her.

In general, love affairs are said to be the main cause of these suicides. They are particularly frequent on the occasions of the nightly dances which are closely connected with the sexual life of the Matako and at such times may take epidemic proportions. A young man will take poison for some reason and soon after others follow suit. Asked why they try to kill themselves, they explain that they feel compelled to do so by some superior force. The fruit attracts them; the desire to eat it becomes an obsession. When they walk in the bush their attention becomes riveted upon the fruit, which they see everywhere, until the temptation becomes too strong and they eat it.

Young boys at school are quite likely to take poison when they have been scolded by their teacher. For this reason the missionaries must exercise particular care to avoid offense when the poisonous fruit is ripe and, consequently, especially dangerous.

Actually there is a great deal of ostentation in these suicides. It is likely that many who take poison, do not take a fatal dose. Those who really wish to die generally take the poison secretly and try to conceal the fact until it is too late to help them. The others, on the contrary, boast about what they have done and are willing, even eager to get medical treatment.

This mania also has its simulators and fakers. Certain individuals imitate all the clinical symptoms, —convulsions, foaming, etc.— without having tasted the deadly fruit. Here again the desire to show off, to be the center of attention is foremost. Every suicide attempt provokes turmoil in the village and everyone flocks to the house where

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762 the victim awaits death. It is said that some men take poison to blackmail a woman into complying with their wishes.

It has been noticed time and again that only young people eat sachasandia as a rule. Among the cases cited above there is only one of an elderly woman who attempted to take her life. In this connection, the question arises of whether suicides are more common among women than among men. No data on this point have been gathered, but it is the impression of the missionaries that suicide is equally common among men and women with perhaps a slight majority among women. The first problem raised by the frequency of these suicides is whether the suicides are caused by new conditions of life —by culture clash and lack, of adjustment to a new world— or whether they were equally frequent formerly when the native culture still functioned? Since no Matako group now lives in its earlier surroundings, the truth of the matter will be difficult to learn. If the problem is presented to the missionaries who are largely responsible for the disappearance of the Indian culture, they always insist that suicides were one of the worst manifestations of the culture before the Indians were saved. They point out, moreover, that the number of suicides was particularly high at the time when the missionaries began their work in the region, and they establish a close relation between suicide and dancing. One of the missionaries wrote to me: "In the old days when the Indians were still dancing, there used to be as many as a dozen attempted suicides in one day, resulting in my being up most of the night going from one to another. They were so many and so frequent, however, and it happened so long ago that I can remember none in detail". This evidence is confirmed by other missionaries who recall that the worst epidemics always occured in connection with the night dances which have a decidedly sexual character. At such times young married men who took part in the entertainments slept with girls, thus arousing the jealousy of their wives and the anger of their mothers-in law. If as a result one or two people committed suicide, others would follow their example.

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The link established between night dances and suicide was the main reason for the strict tabu against dancing which is now enforced in every mission. Indians have been made so aware of the evil of dancing that even little girls have been kept from their normal and charming jumping about. Missionaries, however, are not responsible for this measure; it has been self-imposed by the Indians.

No cases of suicide are known among other tribes who live in the same region and under similar conditions. At any rate, I have never

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been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

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terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

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most that can be said is that the mania found a suitable climate for continuation in that atmosphere of disintegration and pessimism. It must be remembered that similar crises have been observed from the very beginning of the missionary era. It may well be, therefore, that suicide was an institutionalized form of protest under the conditions of the earlier culture undertaken for some concrete reason by one individual who could not otherwise effectively punish members of the in-group, and followed by others whose desires were kindled by the first example.

Suicides seem to have occurred with relative frequency among the Kaingang who were gathered on a reservation in the State of Sao Paulo. Since in certain cases they seem to have been caused by analogous situations to those found among the Matako, the following passage by Manizer may be of interest: "Suicides caused by family quarrels are very common. I know of several cases: Cagndiri attempted to hang herself because of some affair with her husband's brother; for that reason she was expelled from home. Vangrikuiix tried to hang herself when her husband planned to abandon her. Naxo's wife hanged herself to death because of an affair with her husband's brother, quite a young man. Old Karege's son killed himself by hanging after a quarrel with his wife who had refused to eat palmito which he had brought back from the forest. There were two other cases of suicide during the two years the Kaingang were under supervision."[1]

The cases of suicide among South American natives listed by Wisse, in his book "Selbstmord und Todesfurcht bei den Naturvolkern" (Zutphen, 1933) are based on vague references in the travel literature of the last century and as a rule are valueless for science.

[1] Les Kaingangs, 23th International Congress of Americanists, New York, 1928, p. 760-761.

756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

164 "A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts
763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in
764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

768 "On returning from the funeral all the equipment which belonged to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he
[764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

765 "The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

756 or dies from purely natural causes. So when a person becomes sick or has any pain, the sorcerer is immediately called to take away the pain or to restore health. And let no one think that the sorcerer (witchdoctor) must feel the pulse of the sick person or make him stick out his tongue or confuse him and his relatives with the many questions with which our doctors confuse us—no, this would seem to them to be an admission of ignorance and furthermore, highly impertinent; nor do they cudgel their brains to find the cause of the infirmity or care whether there be herbs or special remedies to combat it—not at all, for it would only be a waste of time. Their method of effecting a cure is more simple. The patient having said that he feels pain in such and such a place, the witchdoctor does nothing other than to place his hands on the affected part, but he places them together and half-closed, in such a way that they are in the shape of a hollow vessel, exactly as when boys, with half-closed hands wish to imitate the sound of a trumpet or horn. And with their hands in that way, they begin to blow through [605] them with all the lung power at their command, accompanying the puffing with groans and howls, and persevering in this for hours on end, repeating the ceremony with greater or less frequency according to the state of the invalid and the possibility of payment for their work. Those who have nothing must yet give something to the witchdoctor, and those who have possessions must determine to give all of them to him, and they do so. Some however appear to doubt or at least to mistrust the witchdoctor's ability, for although they will give him all he asks for beforehand, they force him to return everything if his treatment is not efficacious. The one who is most fortunate in the recovery of his patients is the one who acquires most prestige, and he makes a good living. If the patient gets worse, and the witchdoctors see that he is going to die they usually declare him beyond recovery and abandon him in order not to lose prestige, and make excuse as to the incurability of the disease by claiming that some more powerful evil power is acting against him.

●[763] Often, if the witchdoctor who states that the patient is past hope is of some fame, the relatives of the patient will take the sick man out to the burial grounds while he is still alive, will dig his grave, choke him to death and bury him. When, on the other hand, one of their leaders

756 554 or some person of great influence or having many relatives or who is generally well liked becomes seriously ill or is close to death, then there is usually a consultation or general gathering of all the

do, or in white garments as do the Chinese; but they show in their own way that they are in mourning by shaving their heads which are the only parts of their bodies with covering. The women, instead of parading themselves about in their somber garb in churches and public places, hide themselves away in their huts and avoid all contact with their neighbors; they refrain absolutely from talking and apply themselves more diligently to their household duties. They continue in this mourning for a year, during which time it is not proper for them to remarry. Whenever they must needs go out they take the most secluded paths and if one should chance to meet them they cover their faces; they will not talk on any account and avoid any occasion for doing so. It happened that travelers [208] who have met up by chance, in out-of-the-way and therefore suspect places, with women like these who are withdrawn and will not speak, have mistreated and even killed them, being ignorant of the custom.

In addition to shaving their heads they also wail -- a monotonous expressionless chant -- which is apparently dictated by convention and accompanied by the beating of the "pin-pin" which, as I believe I have already said, is a mortar hollowed out of a tree trunk with a tool or with fire. Water is poured into this mortar and then a skin is stretched tightly over it to form a sort of drum. They beat upon this skin with a gourd filled with grains of corn or algarrobo seeds.

They wail in unison at certain stipulated hours, but the widow or mother does so without ceasing, even when she walks through the streets about her business. Relatives and friends accompany the deceased to the grave, and if he be a well loved chief or some famous witch doctor then the whole tribe will go.

Chiefs and particularly famous witch doctors occupy positions of honor among the a'hot who await them, and their influence in the spirit world will be in proportion to the esteem in which they were held by their neighbors, of which the funeral rites will be a yardstick. And so when one of them dies the Indians who are gathered about his bier beg him to bend every effort in their favor when he is far off among the a'hot, and try to influence the storm a'hot and the plague a'hot or the famine a'hot to pardon their villages and visit their enemies. The dying

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man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

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In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

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Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

Funeral Rites

763 If the eyes of a dying person become fixed in a stare, his soul cannot escape and his agony is prolonged. That is why the Matacos cover the faces of the dying with a piece of cloth and knot it about the throat. This cloth often contributes to accelerate the end by asphyxiating them. Their rush to bury the dead is so great that it sometimes results in the interment of persons who are still alive.

764 The widow, her head shaved, is isolated in a corner of the hut, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain, or else she is placed in a small annex attached to the hut.

[762] Immediately after the death of a young man who had committed suicide in the village of San Patricio, his mother crouched on the earth, placed the dead boy's head on her knees and began to grieve for him, saying repeatedly the word "yos," "yos" (my son, my son). The father beat a drum, day and night in accompaniment of a dirge in which the expression "yos," "yos," was much in evidence. A group of women, under the direction of the mother who was shaking a rattle [18] executed a dance which consisted of little jumpy steps near the place where the corpse had been placed before the burial.

587] A widower or a widow may marry again two or three months after their spouse's demise. The women excuse themselves by saying: "I had to eat, I need someone who will clothe me."

Burial up in a tree, as described by Enrique Palavecino, used at one time to be very common in the middle region of the Bermejo.

Belief in the Reality of Dreams

787 The missionary Barbrooke Grubb has given numerous examples
842 of the belief of the Lengua Indians in the reality of dreams. I have myself collected a good many examples of this belief among the Tobas and Pilagas. Here is an anecdote which illustrates this attitude among the Matacos. A girl from the village of San Patricio woke up weeping one beautiful morning. When asked about the cause of her sorrow, she answered that she had dreamed that she had had sexual relations with a young man and was afraid of becoming pregnant... (Footnote: Sent from the Smithsonian Institute of Washington by the author, a corresponding member. Translated from the French by Dr. Fernando Márquez Miranda, also a member).

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Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [554] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned [273] with what was going on. After an interruption, during which everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [552] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

C M 175 462 [846] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the C M Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, [595] and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances C M towards a Spanish woman. . . .

175 "Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes [164] terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they C M usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, [764] those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while C M memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among [771] them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- C M spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may 175 do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. 756 These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

C M 114 This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

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774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

000 of small stones contained in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

•764 "They bury their dead very close to the surface, being satisfied to dig a shallow pit into which they place the corpse half sitting up, with a few small branches beneath and on top of him and a little earth. Because of this it often comes about that jaguars, who can easily dig up these careless graves, get a taste for human flesh and become man-eaters. Sometimes the Indians put a little pot of water in the grave for the deceased's benefit. They also commonly burn a few things which he had used, and also his hut. The relatives of the deceased have to go to his burial place and lament over it, accompanying their cries with the pimpin. These wailings, according to the locality, are repeated for some days. They have also other [177] customs which they have picked up from the Tobas, to whom they are related and with whom they are friendly."

181 "It can be seen, then, that the Mataco tribe is at present a very
648 miserable one. Their way of living and their customs, furthermore, and the circumstances of our times together with the region in which they live do not point to a particularly happy future. It certainly cannot be said that the Matacos who live in Bolivian territory are declared enemies of the [607] whites or Christians, rather is it true that they sometimes work for them and say that they are friends of the whites and wish to be treated as such, in spite of the fact that this friendship seems feigned, a cloak under which they can the better steal and conceal themselves. They rustle the Christians' cattle which they exchange with the Tobas for horses, and these in turn they trade off to the Christians for other things they need, saying that they have captured these animals from their enemies."

181 "Across from the Mission of San Francisco de Pilcomayo and
787 on the banks of the river (the Pilcomayo River--Translator) are the ruins of the Mission of San Antonio, made up of Matacos brought together in 1863 and which, after having been in Bella Esperanza for two or three years were transferred to this place, where they stayed, in quite sizeable numbers, until 1879, in which year they escaped, although groups of them had fled and returned more than once before. While they remained at the Mission little or nothing could be accomplished with them in any way—they would not even consent to allowing their little children to be baptized when at the point of death. The

Chiriguanos SF10

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The bodies of those who have been executed for repeated murder are flung out on the ground or else burned.

Some Indians, among them the Chirionoses (1) who live on

1. Tribes of the Chiriguano type. (Ed.)

the Bolivian or Brazilian frontiers, bury their dead in the trunks of trees. To this end they go into the thickest parts of the forest, choose out a yuchan tree, which has a bottle shaped trunk and is as soft as cork, fell it and place the corpse inside it, covering it over well to keep the crows from getting at it. When the Fort Sarmiento road was opened up a short time ago one of these burial trees was found, quite by chance.

M 76H

The Matacos make a practice of burying their dead under ground, although some tribes, those towards the east who live close to the Tobas, burn them. This practice, one would suppose, is one which they have in common with the Tobas.

It is to be supposed that the beliefs held by the Matacos in this matter of interment are also held by the other wild Indians with whom they are continually in fighting contact, either as allies or as enemies, and with whom they share the same spirit cult.

M 76I

Now the Matacos, as has been said, believe that the soul of the dead has no rest until the body has been buried within tribal territory. I have no reason to believe that an exception is made for those who die in battle. They believe also that the soul, which they call "hesék" (they give the name of "tzan" to the body, and "hot" to a corpse) does not descend into the earth to be with its companions until the body has decomposed, either by rot or by fire. They say that until this happens the soul wanders about around the family hut, sometimes becoming visible and complaining about its lot.

M [52]

This business of the appearance of souls (or ghosts) and their cries of lamentation is the subject of a great deal of foolish old wives' tales among them, almost to the point of their not talking about anything else, and I would wager that it is the cause of as much fright among them as it is amongst us.

[207] It follows that even when an individual has died outside his territory, his relatives and the members of his village will go and bring the corpse back to home ground for burial. But since transporting a corpse would be a very difficult matter for people who customarily get about on foot and who often have to travel hundreds of kilometers, they wait for such time to pass as will allow the corpse to lose its flesh, and then all they need to transport are the bones. This practice is in no way detrimental to the deceased for his soul cannot go under ground in any event until decomposition is finished. M 764

When death strikes, if it should be morning, then that very afternoon, and if it should be evening, then the very next morning, the corpse is placed in a grave. This grave is not filled in but is covered with branches so that the body may not supply a meal for jaguars, dogs or carrion eating birds. Once decomposition is over the remains are either burned, as has been said, or the grave is completely filled in and covered.

When a person dies far away from home, his body is wrapped in a net, in a squatting position, and then placed in a tree and covered so as to protect it from the above mentioned dangers; about a year later, or before if opportunity offers (but always when the bones are left) the relatives of the deceased return to pick up his remains and take them back to his hut where they are given the longed for burial. M 766

But wherever they may place the corpse they always put a pot full of water beside it. The reason for this is that just as soon as the individual dies the other departed ones gather round for a visit; and both they and he also might possibly become thirsty, and that is why he is given the wherewithal to slake their thirst. Anyone who knows the value which is placed on water in this region will understand why it seems important to the Indians to place some of this element at the disposal of the deceased, and will also be able to deduce that a bond of hospitality and fraternal feeling exists which continues even beyond the grave. Furthermore, our own pagan ancestors believed and practiced similar rites. M 764

As the Chaco Indians are poor and go about naked they can not take advantage of the occasion of the death of their loved ones to show themselves off in expensive black clothing, as the whites M C 765

"moon" (i-que-lacq). In this they agree with the languages of all nations, a thing which is still preserved amongst us in poetic usage, while the common language of prose has undergone such changes with the passage of time that the words no longer appear to have their primitive material significance of sun and moon. M 805

Either by analogy from "moon" to "a light" or vice versa, the fact is that the word for both "moon" and "a light" is the same. ●M

This is not true of the word for "fire," for to this element special properties are attributed as the Chiriguanos condemn the bodies of those who die in the odor, or rather, taste, of evil, to be burned; and the Tobas and Matacos burn all bodies. This practice among the two latter nations is to be explained by their desire to hasten as much as possible the final condition which will benefit the deceased, that is, that as soon as the fleshy parts are consumed the soul will be able to descend into the earth and be among its companions. C 764 ●

[213] Despite the fact that they are innocent of matches and sulfur, not to mention steel for striking fire, since they have no flint, they can produce fire at will. I have already described the manner in which they do this, by twirling one stick rapidly upon another which is lying on the ground until the sawdust which results -- which looks like finely powdered roasted coffee grounds -- begins to glow. Then they heap a kind of highly combustible wood onto it, blow it until a flame appears and from this they can make as large a fire as they wish. One of the two sticks which they use is from the chilca bush, which is aromatic, resinous and porous and is found in abundance throughout the Argentine Republic. M 372

It is customary to say that each Indian does everything for himself, and that this is the cause for his slowness and backwardness. But this is not so. They may be wanderers, but they do not for this reason refrain from a certain distribution of labor. There are amongst them weapon makers, canoe builders, net makers, weavers, etc., who sell their manufactured goods to their companions and receive others in exchange for them. They have, then, their guilds of arts and skills, but in an embryonic stage, of course. They also have particular terms to express themselves in this field, which in Mataco are formed from the word which indicates an object plus a particle indicative of function. Of these particles <u>)hi</u> M 463 M 192 463

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Toba SI12

M 776 821 in drought, in eclipses, etc. Thunder and lightning, for instance, are caused by the demons called *aittáh tavakái pählai* (the »thunder demons»), which pass in great numbers through the air or above the clouds. Eclipses of the moon, on the other hand, are attributed to a demon called *aittáh hayáh* which is supposed to prey upon the moon. The Mataco try to frighten away both the thunder-demons and the demon eclipsing the moon by shouting loudly and making a noise, and by beating drums.

M 775 774 The same may be said of the nature of the *aittáh* and the *nahút* as has been said of the *möhsek* of the Choroti. It seems to me probable that they are in their origin nothing but spirits of the dead or disembodied human souls. From this point of view, I believe, Pelleschi is right when he says that the religion of the Mataco can be characterized as essentially a worship of souls. But there are disembodied souls of different kinds. The Mataco-word for »soul» is *kasïtah*. It is the soul that detaches itself from the body, temporarily during dreams, permanently in death. As a death-spirit the *kasïtah* is generally the object of fear. Of these death-spirits some, which are particularly evil-minded, become *nahút* or personifications of mortal diseases, whereas others have become personifications of curable illnesses and lesser evils. It is a well known fact that the spirits of certain persons — especially of sorcerers and persons who have died a violent death — are greatly feared, and just such spirits are likely to M turn into that particular kind of demon whom the Mataco call *nahút*. The ●[764] fact that graves are regarded as the dwelling-places of these demons confirms the conclusion that the *nahút* are in their nature nothing but disembodied human souls.

T 776 As to the *T o b a s*, I have already mentioned that they call the spirits *peyák*. Like the Mataco, the Tobas fancy that these spirits appear in the shape of small boys (*nätolik*), and in daily life, when speaking of these beings, they more often use the word *nätolik* than the word *peyák*. Although the spirits in the main have human form, they at the same time resemble birds, and more particularly ostriches. At any rate the Tobas informed me that »the *peyák* have wings, large like those of the ostrich» — an idea quite natural to a people who even identify living men with ostriches. Still they are mostly invisible to the human eye; only the medicine-men who are endowed with a special clear-sightedness can see them and enter into communication with them. The whole world swarms with these mysterious beings, who are regarded as the causes of all evils that befall man. Everything that has been stated on this

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the death-spirit from rising from the grave. The Tobas believe that if shortly after the burial the body is exhumed, the spirit will come out and may transform himself into a tiger which will kill the people. But the latter may sometimes happen even without any particular profanation of the burial-place.

The customs here described with particular reference to the Tobas are typical of the burial customs of the Pilcomayo tribes in general. Thus the Choroti and the Mataco as a rule bury the corpse in a seated or reclining posture as do the Tobas. There are however exceptions to this rule, and at least in one case which came under my notice the dead Choroti man had been buried in a lying posture. At each end of the grave had been placed a clay pot, partly filled with water. The idea underlying this arrangement was not quite clear. Since among the Indians supernatural power is frequently ascribed to clay pots, it is probable that they had been placed on the tomb for some superstitious reasons, perhaps with a view to keeping off the death-demon. I may add that among the Chaco Indians offerings of food and drink, or other kinds of offering, are not generally made to the spirits of the departed. Certain traces of food and drink offerings have been found among the Mataco, but on the whole we may say that the cult of the dead, which plays such an important part in the religion of most South American Indians, is unknown to the natives of the Gran Chaco. When I asked the Choroti whether they would not offer food and drink to the spirit of an Indian who had recently been buried, they laughed and answered: »He is dead, he wants no food». Still of course neither the Choroti nor other Chaco Indians have wholly divested their minds of the primitive idea that in the after-life the soul has to a certain extent the same wants and appetites as in this earthly life.

As a rule the place where a person has been buried is not, among the Choroti and the Mataco, marked by any tomb or heap of earth thrown up over the grave. Some tribes, however, at any rate the Choroti, are in the habit of constructing, over the place, a primitive kind of hut, consisting of a roof of twigs and grass resting upon four poles. The hut is said to be »the habitation of the *móhsel*». Chiefs and old family fathers are particularly honoured in this way after death.

The customs practised immediately after a death are in their main features the same in all Chaco tribes. The Choroti, as soon as the sick Indian has drawn his last breath, start to make a tremendous noise with all sorts of rattles and by shouting and wailing. The medicine-men

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Choroti SK6

M C 764 M [535]

chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a »sign of sorrow», but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *náhsah* (= *eis sáhe*), *i. e.* »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M 764 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algaroba beer is most appreciated, but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

755 ing to the disease while an old woman, who was a magician, sang and blew on the patient. The others were talking among themselves without paying any attention to what was happening. After a pause, during which everybody drank some of the wine required by the disease, a singing man started to run around the patient, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine-man spoke once more with disease while the medicine-woman continued blowing on the patient and another medicine-man placed around the head of the patient front pages of illustrated papers and popular novels. The man who was running stopped and the chief medicine-man started talking with the others. Everybody sat down and drank some water, then two women began to walk rapidly around the others while they sang. One of them stopped and after a short while the other [335] one stopped too. Then all who were present started dancing. The dance was interrupted only by the coughing of the patient who seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. She actually died during the ceremony. Immediately after her [764] death the dance stopped. The old women ran about singing and shaking their rattles. Two men laid the dead woman on her right side and folded her legs and arms. They wrapped her in the pieces of cloth on which she had been lying and she was taken to her home. The medicine-men undressed quietly while the women of the family uttered lamentations.

c) *General Expulsion of Disease*

755 292 The ceremony for general expulsion of disease took place early in the morning in the open air, far from all houses. It was performed by all the medicine-men of the village stand- [534] ing in a row. All were holding in their hands a rattle-gourd and a bone whistle. Some were provided with strips of cloth to which were attached rattles; the strips were worn across the chest or hung at the elbow. Others wore ceremonial shirts, some wore shirts made of *caraguatá* fiber and one

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

that all movement is impossible except to stamp, the spiral begins to unfold itself, first very slowly, then more and more quickly. The dancers are sometimes many. The circle divides into two files which develop simultaneously on both sides of the enclosure. 535

5. The young men form a file from the center of the dance enclosure to the outer border. Each dancer puts his hand on the shoulder of one neighbor and his other hand on the hip of his other neighbor. The file starts slowly to move; the man in the center whirls himself in a circle and the others follow the movement. The movement is faster toward the outer ends of the file and is accompanied by songs. Sometimes the singing stops but the movement goes on, then the singing starts again.

From time to time the dance is interrupted by a young man following a girl. After they have been running through the dancing place of the village they ordinarily sleep together and on the following day appear with their faces painted red. 832 302 836

According to my informant the dancing songs have no meaning, being mere rhythmic utterances. 533

XIX. Mourning Rites

A man is buried in the bush in a grave about six feet deep immediately after dying. The dead are buried reclining on their right sides with their faces toward their fields. If they were placed in any other position they could not find the way to their houses and they would become lost. No food is given to the dead except a calabash half filled with water. The soul drinks this water to quench his thirst during his journey to the underworld. All the personal belongings of the deceased are burned and their souls come out to join the soul of their owner. His animals are not killed, but when they die their souls join that of their master. 764

Immediately after death all grown up members of the deceased, even very remote relatives, begin to weep, ac-

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

companying themselves on rattles and drums. These laments last for about one hour after death, then begin again when the corpse is carried away to be buried and finally when they come back from the burial. But on the following day only very near relatives parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, go on weeping. Those who were already mourning for someone else weep louder than the others because they mourn for two.

The laments take place at sunrise and at sunset as well as in the middle of the afternoon. During the first days of mourning the near relatives of the deceased go to his home to mourn. There they run and dance, going continually from one place to another and shaking their rattles with both hands. They accompany the dance with lamentations. With the exception of the wife of the deceased, women always mourn in this way, shaking rattles, dancing and lamentations. Mourning women must not appear bareheaded or with a naked face for they ought not to be seen. People sing and play on rattles during the mourning period in order that the dead person may readily be forgotten. The laments which last two or three hours every day are supposed to help the living forget the dead. After six months, more or less, they weep only at dawn and even then very rarely. The relatives of the dead person must cut off their hair in order not to displease the dead who would attack their heads and make them bald. The wife, at the death of her husband, observes mourning for two years. She shuts herself up in a special little hut often adjoining the hut of her married son, or daughter if she has no son.

The house of the deceased is pulled down and a new one built about 10 yards away. If this were not done the dead man would come back within fourteen days after death, attracted by memories of his previous life. The materials of the old house are used in the construction of the new one.

A widow may leave her home to satisfy her wants only at night. If she goes out during the day the dead man gets

Funeral Rites

763 If the eyes of a dying person become fixed in a stare, his soul cannot escape and his agony is prolonged. That is why the Matacos cover the faces of the dying with a piece of cloth and knot it about the throat. This cloth often contributes to accelerate the end by asphyxiating them. Their rush to bury the dead is so great that it sometimes results in the interment of persons who are still alive.

● 764 The widow, her head shaved, is isolated in a corner of the hut, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain, or else she is placed in a small annex attached to the hut.

[762] Immediately after the death of a young man who had committed suicide in the village of San Patricio, his mother crouched on the earth, placed the dead boy's head on her knees and began to grieve for him, saying repeatedly the word "yos," "yos" (my son, my son). The father beat a drum, day and night in accompaniment of a dirge in which the expression "yos," "yos," was much in evidence. A group of women, under the direction of the mother who was shaking a rattle [18] executed a dance which consisted of little jumpy steps near the place where the corpse had been placed before the burial.

587] A widower or a widow may marry again two or three months after their spouse's demise. The women excuse themselves by saying: "I had to eat, I need someone who will clothe me."

Burial up in a tree, as described by Enrique Palavecino, used at one time to be very common in the middle region of the Bemejo.

Belief in the Reality of Dreams

787 842 The missionary Barbrooke Grubb has given numerous examples of the belief of the Lengua Indians in the reality of dreams. I have myself collected a good many examples of this belief among the Tobas and Pilagas. Here is an anecdote which illustrates this attitude among the Matacos. A girl from the village of San Patricio woke up weeping one beautiful morning. When asked about the cause of her sorrow, she answered that she had dreamed that she had had sexual relations with a young man and was afraid of becoming pregnant... (Footnote: Sent from the Smithsonian Institute of Washington by the author, a corresponding member. Translated from the French by Dr. Fernando Márquez Miranda, also a member).

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762

together with his people but, after some difficulties with his young wife, took poison and died.

Ninth case. Martin, a 15 year old boy, was the kitchen boy of the mission and had always been a cheerful and willing worker. One day he told the missionary that he was married. From that time on, he looked troubled and became restless. Later the missionary was told that Martin did not like the girl with whom he lived but that the girl, who had a forceful character, would not permit him to leave her. Finally, depressed and broken, Martin told the missionary about his unhappy situation. He was advised to separate from his wife and determined to do so. Despite this resolution, he remained with her; to excuse himself he explained that every time he wanted to tell her to go away, "he would become weak all over and could say nothing". His own words were, "Then I go all weak and sleep with her".

The quarreling continued and things went from bad to worse. About this time Martin and his brother killed a cow that belonged to a white settler. The missionary, of course, learned about the theft. Knowing that the missionary would be angry, Martin left the kitchen and refused to return. In a state of utter dejection, he took poison but was saved by the missionary.

Two or three days later, during a quarrel over some meat, his elder brother struck him in the face. Angry and humiliated by the blow, the boy went to the forest and secretly ate sachasandia. In the evening he returned to the missionary who only noticed that one of his eyes was swollen and badly bruised. He was more depressed than ever and sighed on and on. Finally he took the missionary's hand, said goodby and, with another sigh, went home. When the missionary was called to his bedside, it was too late. He died the same night.

Martin had re-married a few days before his death. His new wife was a nice girl of about 14 years. She discovered his condition early in the night and tried to persuade his father to fetch the missionary. The old man slept on and paid no attention. When it was already too late, the boy's mother asked for help, but the father remained indifferent throughout. The moment the boy was dead, his mother squatted down, laid his head on her knees and started the death wailing, "My son, my son, my son...". The other women joined in the lament. The next day the father beat his drum without stopping.

[764]

Tenth case. This attempt at suicide was made by an old woman of some 50 years, who had grown children and grandchildren. One of her sons was Martin, whose death was described above.

One afternoon, when she had mourned for her son for many days, she took poison. Evidently she was very tired and depressed. Her

756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

164 "A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts 763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in 764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

768 "On returning from the funeral all the equipment which belonged to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he [764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

● 765 "The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some [262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat [263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of [262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and [756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black, [165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of 302 [765] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

skin color, and also because of the scratches which become caked, and 515
because of the sun's burning which wrinkles the almost scorched skin, especially on their shoulders; and finally because they go about barefoot and naked in the mud, through the underbrush and bushes, and as they lie down on the bare earth it is only natural that they should be covered with dust, just as we, who wash a thousand times a day do a thousand times become dirty again. They are not -- pardon the expression -- grubby, and I firmly contend that they are not dirty by nature.

An Indian camp is composed of an undetermined number of 342 [361]
dwellings, made by sticking branches into the ground and tying them together on top in the form of a cupola. Onto this frame they throw quantities of straw until it looks like, not a hut, but a wagon so loaded with hay as to cover the very wheels.

They hurl the straw from quite some distance and yet so accurately as to cause wonder, so much the more as it is the women who do this work. A hut, once finished, is so strongly constructed that a man can stand and move about upon it, and it is quite waterproof.

[177] Each chief has his own group of huts, like so many barracks, [622]
and sometimes, especially on the occasion of a declaration of war, many chiefs gather.

The huts are usually so low-ceilinged that one cannot stand up inside, but they vary as to length according to the rank of the family and the number of families which live in them. The long huts are somewhat humped, with two or more doors. The entrance ways are usually protected, on the windy side of the hut, by a fixed windbreak -- one must stoop in order to be able to enter.

A hut is divided into the following parts: the kitchens and the sections where sleeping, sitting, working etc. is carried on; however, there is no material separation between these parts.

The kitchen is nothing more than a swept space on which a fire [354]
is lighted, but only when the weather is cold or when the family mother [765]
is in mourning, during which time she does not leave the hut for a year, or allow herself to be seen, nor does she speak except when strictly necessary. The usual thing is to cook food outside near the entrance. There are as many kitchens as there are families.

The bedroom consists of that portion of the hut where they 352
place skins and clothes, if they have any, upon which they lie and which they put on when they go out if it is cold. On the walls at the

[207] It follows that even when an individual has died outside his territory, his relatives and the members of his village will go and bring the corpse back to home ground for burial. But since transporting a corpse would be a very difficult matter for people who customarily get about on foot and who often have to travel hundreds of kilometers, they wait for such time to pass as will allow the corpse to lose its flesh, and then all they need to transport are the bones. This practice is in no way detrimental to the deceased for his soul cannot go under ground in any event until decomposition is finished. M 764

When death strikes, if it should be morning, then that very afternoon, and if it should be evening, then the very next morning, the corpse is placed in a grave. This grave is not filled in but is covered with branches so that the body may not supply a meal for jaguars, dogs or carrion eating birds. Once decomposition is over the remains are either burned, as has been said, or the grave is completely filled in and covered.

When a person dies far away from home, his body is wrapped in a net, in a squatting position, and then placed in a tree and covered so as to protect it from the above mentioned dangers; about a year later, or before if opportunity offers (but always when the bones are left) the relatives of the deceased return to pick up his remains and take them back to his hut where they are given the longed for burial. M 766

But wherever they may place the corpse they always put a pot full of water beside it. The reason for this is that just as soon as the individual dies the other departed ones gather round for a visit; and both they and he also might possibly become thirsty, and that is why he is given the wherewithal to slake their thirst. Anyone who knows the value which is placed on water in this region will understand why it seems important to the Indians to place some of this element at the disposal of the deceased, and will also be able to deduce that a bond of hospitality and fraternal feeling exists which continues even beyond the grave. Furthermore, our own pagan ancestors believed and practiced similar rites. M 764

As the Chaco Indians are poor and go about naked they cannot take advantage of the occasion of the death of their loved ones to show themselves off in expensive black clothing, as the whites M C 765

M C 765

do, or in white garments as do the Chinese, but they show in their own way that they are in mourning by shaving their heads which are the only parts of their bodies with covering. The women, instead of parading themselves about in their somber garb in churches and public places, hide themselves away in their huts and avoid all contact with their neighbors; they refrain absolutely from talking and apply themselves more diligently to their household duties. They continue in this mourning for a year, during which time it is not proper for them to remarry. Whenever they must needs go out they take the most secluded paths and if one should chance to meet them they cover their faces; they will not talk on any account and avoid any occasion for doing so. It happened that travelers [208] who have met up by chance, in out-of-the-way and therefore suspect places, with women like these who are withdrawn and will not speak, have mistreated and even killed them, being ignorant of the custom.

In addition to shaving their heads they also wail -- a monotonous expressionless chant -- which is apparently dictated by convention and accompanied by the beating of the "pin-pin" which, as I believe I have already said, is a mortar hollowed out of a tree trunk with a tool or with fire. Water is poured into this mortar and then a skin is stretched tightly over it to form a sort of drum. They beat upon this skin with a gourd filled with grains of corn or algarrobo seeds.

They wail in unison at certain stipulated hours, but the widow or mother does so without ceasing, even when she walks through the streets about her business. Relatives and friends accompany the deceased to the grave, and if he be a well loved chief or some famous witch doctor then the whole tribe will go.

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Chiefs and particularly famous witch doctors occupy positions of honor among the a'hot who await them, and their influence in the spirit world will be in proportion to the esteem in which they were held by their neighbors of which the funeral rites will be a yardstick. And so when one of them dies the Indians who are gathered about his bier beg him to bend every effort in their favor when he is far off among the a'hot, and try to influence the storm a'hot and the plague a'hot or the famine a'hot to pardon their villages and visit their enemies. The dying

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

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the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

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Among the *Mataco*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruháh*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *ovaittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

M [765]

M [751]

M 301 789

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets,[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

M [756]

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[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich, *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 231.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba 5112
Choroti SK6

relatives of the departed cannot live safely in it. This is the reason why in the Gran Chaco a traveller so often encounters remains of Indian villages which have evidently been burnt and abandoned by their inhabitants. The radical destruction of the whole village is always resorted to when several deaths have taken place at short intervals. The relatives of the deceased, when they abandon their own village, generally go and live with their relatives and friends in a neighbouring village, where they stay for some time, or until they decide to found a new settlement in some other part of the country. Custom requires that when the mourners arrive at the other village, they shall be received with wailing.

The Tobas, although they always burn the house where a death has taken place, do not as a rule deem it necessary to destroy the whole village. Similarly the relatives of the deceased generally remain there, building themselves a new dwelling; in other cases they leave the place for some time. The other inhabitants of the village, on the other hand, make no notable change in their mode of life, since they are not to the same extent exposed to danger from the death-spirit as the nearest relations.

Weeping and wailing plays an important part among the mourning ceremonies of the Indians, although it is always limited to the women and the children. The fact that wailing is ceremonial clearly appears from the circumstances under which it takes place. Although it is beyond doubt that the Indians are capable of real feelings of sorrow at the death of a near relation, yet their intense fear of death — including the fear of the dead body — is apparent throughout their mourning customs. The object of the wailing seems to be partly to propitiate the spirit of the departed relative by showing him how deeply the survivors grieve at his death, partly to frighten away the death-demon by the noise. The latter point of view is probably the most important. Wailing is continued for several months after the death. The length of the wailing period varies according to the social importance of the deceased. A great chief is mourned in all tribes for longer than an ordinary member of the community, in some cases up to a whole year. As to the manner of wailing there is a marked distinction between the Tobas and the Mataco on the one hand, and the Choroti on the other. The wailing of the Toba women is like a greatly exaggerated loud crying and sobbing which is seemingly the expression of a desperate sorrow. The wailing of the Choroti women is calmer and more like the weeping of a child. Every lamentation consists of a series of sounds produced in a high falsetto voice and

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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C 765 forming a falling scale in a minor key, which makes a very peculiar impression. At the time of mourning the women and children commence this wailing at fairly regular intervals and all at once, as if it were agreed upon. To one who lives for some time in a Choroti village it is evident C 765 that wailing forms part of Indian etiquette. Not only must the mourners, when they arrive from another village, which has been abandoned on 876 account of a death, be received by a choir of weeping women and children; any guest who arrives in a village shortly after a death has taken place there is received in the same way. When in March 1912 I visited the Choroti in the interior of their land, where no European had yet penetrated, I noticed with astonishment that on my arrival at a village I was received with loud wailing by the women and children. I soon learnt that a great chief had died some time ago; but the fact that the wailing was renewed to receive me remained unexplained. I was told, however, that this peculiar way of receiving strangers was prescribed by Choroti custom. The most probable explanation seems to me that it is feared lest the spirit of the defunct should revisit his people in a strange disguise, and that the wailing has for its object to propitiate him or to frighten him away. Such ideas prevail among other South American tribes also, both in the Chaco and elsewhere.

M C T 765 302 562 There are certain other customs observed in connection with mourning, but they are as a rule limited to the women. Among all Pilcomayo tribes it is customary that when a man dies, his widow, daughters, and sisters cut their hair short with the sharp teeth of the *palometa* fish and burn it. Ceremonial wailing always attends the cutting of the hair. When I asked the Choroti why a widow cuts and destroys her hair after the death of her husband, I was told that the dead husband, who wants his wife to follow him to the grave, is believed to attack her through the hair. In order to rid herself of this danger she shaves it off. Exactly T 765 the same belief prevails among the Tobas: the dead husband or father will seize his surviving wife or daughter by the hair and cause her to fall ill and die. Among the Tobas a widow cuts her hair twice, first immediately after the husband's death, the second time some months later T [602] when the hair has again grown long. At the same time she repeats the wailing. Similarly the nearest female relatives have to diet, in so far as they are not allowed to eat fish for many months. If they infringe the rules of diet in regard to fish they may sicken and die. After a Toba woman has cut her hair the second time she may again eat fish, her mourning is over and she is allowed to marry again. Even some of the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

men abstain from eating fish for some time after the death of a near relation. T 765

Apart from the custom of cutting the hair neither the Tobas nor other Pilcomayo tribes nowadays practise ceremonial mutilations of any kind. Formerly however, as the Tobas told me, they practised the following mourning custom. When a woman died, her eldest son had to cut off one of his finger nails. The nail was fastened to a string and hung round the neck of a dog, which was thereafter driven away. If the son omitted to do this, it was believed that the soul of the woman would enter into the nail and kill him in the shape of a tiger into which it would transform itself. This could be prevented by sending away the nail. The dog carrying it away would meet some other tribesman into which the soul would enter and thus become harmless. for the spirits of the dead are harmful only to the nearest relatives. The Indian who told me this added that the custom is no longer practised by the Tobas, because nowadays it very seldom happens that people are killed by tigers and thus the belief that women are changed into such beasts after death has lost its foundation. This again, according to the Indian belief, is owing to the fact that the medicine-men are now able to provide against such sad eventualities by their incantations and conjurations. T 765 775

As to the explanation of these observances, we have already seen that the abstention from eating fish is due to the idea that the death-demon may possibly hide in the fish and gain entrance into the body. Of special interest are the mourning customs relating to hair and nails. Hair-cutting as a mourning practice of women is met with among most South American Indians and — like other kinds of mutilation — are essentially purification ceremonies of purely magical significance. In the hair and the nails according to primitive belief the vital power of the human body is concentrated. One who possesses these essential parts of a person's body is believed to possess his soul, through which he will be able to exert magical influence upon him. If this is so, it is conceivable that invisible supernatural enemies would take particular interest in these parts. Consequently, when a woman is in a delicate situation, she takes the precaution to remove and destroy these critical parts of her body. According to Indian belief, women are always more exposed to supernatural dangers than men, and therefore have to be more careful in every respect. M 765 826

The fear of the dead is also manifested in that their *names* are forbidden to be mentioned. This is another general superstition among the M 765 551

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

765 551 Chaco tribes. These savages as a rule are very reluctant to mention their true Indian names. Thus, as I have mentioned before, when the Chaco Indians visit the whites they nearly always assume names for use instead of their real names. If the Indians are thus careful with the names of the living, those of the dead are particularly regarded as taboo and must never be mentioned, especially by the nearest relatives. When I asked one of my Indian friends about the name of a man who had just died, he hesitated for a moment, looked round, and when he saw that no one of the relatives was near, he *whispered* the name in my ear. This superstition, [774] I believe, is ultimately based on the idea, held by all Indians, that *the soul of a person is inherent in his name*. To know a person's name is therefore the same as to have his soul in one's power, and supernatural influences can be exerted upon him through this invisible part of his personality, just as they can be exerted through a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail. If the soul is believed to be in the name, we can easily understand why the names of the dead are especially taboo. To mention it is the same as to enter into close contact with the departed soul itself, to which the infection of death is attached, and this is supposed to entail unfortunate consequences, at least for the nearest relatives. For an outsider there is evidently not the same personal danger. But since a person may be controlled and conjured through his name, it is further believed that the rest of the dead in the grave may be disturbed by mentioning his name. It is therefore considered a dreadful indiscretion against the relatives to speak of the deceased by name. This is the idea prevailing both among the Tobas and among other Chaco tribes. Generally [195] the Indians do not like to speak about the dead at all, and if they do, their tacit maxim is: *de mortuis nil nisi bene*. The relatives would never admit that they fear a dead parent and regard him as malicious. They always pronounce him to be »good», as if believing that by such a euphemism they may change his character or paralyse the harmful effects arising from him.

3. Metraux . E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

may kill him. The snake's *āhat* is called *punsoya* (perhaps Spanish-pouzoña : poison).

When a man is bitten by a snake he must kill the reptile and take it home in order to be cured rapidly. If he has been bitten while away from his home, he must dig a groove and put the snake into it, facing it in the opposite direction to that which he is taking. Thus the snake cannot enter him.

Tawkxwax taught the men the procedure to be followed in order to cure snake bites.

XII. How to Become a Singer

Those who want to become good singers must go to the bush and stay there for quite a long time. They must kill birds who are good singers and eat them after they have been made into powder and mixed with blood extracted from the arm. When they are in the bush they must first beat a drum, then run. Thus they will perhaps dream about a singing bird. When they wake up they must then take their drums and sing the song they heard in their dreams. One must not awaken until the song is finished or he will not remember it. Everyone has two songs and he must sing them every day in order to learn them. Ordinarily several young men go to the bush and after they have dreamed of a song they sing one after another. Generally three or four days are sufficient to master a song.

One must not sing someone else's song. If after one has eaten a bird he dreams of an iguana, it is no longer worth while to go on, for he will never become a good singer. The birds one dreams about and who teach one how to sing are not ordinary birds, they are *paata* (supernatural beings). The women do not know how to sing but they can cry when they have to mourn. Not all women know how to weep. In order to weep well, a woman must dream about another woman who is a good mourner. There are some exceptional women who can sing.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

764 companying themselves on rattles and drums. These laments last for about one hour after death, then begin again when the corpse is carried away to be buried and finally when they come back from the burial. But on the following day only very near relatives parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, go on weeping. Those who were already mourning for someone else weep louder than the others because they mourn for two.

●765 The laments take place at sunrise and at sunset as well as in the middle of the afternoon. During the first days of mourning the near relatives of the deceased go to his home [535] to mourn. There they run and dance, going continually from one place to another and shaking their rattles with both hands. They accompany the dance with lamentations. With the exception of the wife of the deceased, women always mourn in this way, shaking rattles, dancing and lamentations. Mourning women must not appear bareheaded or with a naked face for they ought not to be seen. People [533] sing and play on rattles during the mourning period in order that the dead person may readily be forgotten. The laments which last two or three hours every day are supposed to help the living forget the dead. After six months, more or less, they weep only at dawn and even then very rarely. [302] The relatives of the dead person must cut off their hair in order not to displease the dead who would attack their heads and make them bald. The wife, at the death of her husband, observes mourning for two years. She shuts herself up in a special little hut often adjoining the hut of her married son, or daughter if she has no son.

768 The house of the deceased is pulled down and a new one built about 10 yards away. If this were not done the dead man would come back within fourteen days after death, attracted by memories of his previous life. The materials of the old house are used in the construction of the new one.

A widow may leave her home to satisfy her wants only at night. If she goes out during the day the dead man gets

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

consideration in proportion to what was his while he was alive and 775
amongst his neighbors of his own village. This belief causes them to show great reverence for those of their number who have died.

Despite the a'hóts' inclination for wandering about, they yet ever remain in the vicinity of the place where the bodies to which they belonged died.

The soul of a person who dies in a foreign place and who has not been given burial in his home territory, is condemned to wander alone, despised and sad in the midst of the souls of strangers.

I asked my guide why it was that fortune was so cruel with 766
those wretches who, through no fault of their own, died and left their bodies far from their native place; to which he answered: "The mere fact of these bodies having been left abandoned in a far off place by their companions and by the sons of the same tribe, was a sign that while they were alive they had not enjoyed the love and esteem of the others. The foreign a'hóts on seeing the soul of an outsider make an appearance amongst them reason in this way: 'if the person to whom this soul belonged was not honored by his companions or by the sons of his own tribe, nor given burial befitting a brother, then he was neither loved nor esteemed by his own people.' This being so, then they also shun him and leave him alone." I only repeat the rascal's words.

This reminds me of the veneration which the peoples of all nations accord to their burial grounds, and, in this matter of the souls of the unburied being condemned to wander, these Indians have the same beliefs as the ancient Romans according to what Virgil so beautifully expresses in the Aenead.

These beliefs are the basis of the ceremonies to cure the sick and to bury the dead.

But before entering upon their description I must call atten- 821
tion to a sort of star cult, especially amongst the women. These 795
heavenly bodies are the moon and the morning star.

When the moon rises the women leave their huts and, holding hands, form a circle and begin to wheel rapidly, jumping and shouting in honor of the silvery moon.

They do the same thing when the morning star appears on the eastern horizon, and pray to it that the algarrobo pod crop and other wild fruits may be abundant.

[207] It follows that even when an individual has died outside his territory, his relatives and the members of his village will go and bring the corpse back to home ground for burial. But since transporting a corpse would be a very difficult matter for people who customarily get about on foot and who often have to travel hundreds of kilometers, they wait for such time to pass as will allow the corpse to lose its flesh, and then all they need to transport are the bones. This practice is in no way detrimental to the deceased for his soul cannot go under ground in any event until decomposition is finished. M 764

When death strikes, if it should be morning, then that very afternoon, and if it should be evening, then the very next morning, the corpse is placed in a grave. This grave is not filled in but is covered with branches so that the body may not supply a meal for jaguars, dogs or carrion eating birds. Once decomposition is over the remains are either burned, as has been said, or the grave is completely filled in and covered.

When a person dies far away from home, his body is wrapped in a net, in a squatting position, and then placed in a tree and covered so as to protect it from the above mentioned dangers; about a year later, or before if opportunity offers (but always when the bones are left) the relatives of the deceased return to pick up his remains and take them back to his hut where they are given the longed for burial. M 766

But wherever they may place the corpse they always put a pot full of water beside it. The reason for this is that just as soon as the individual dies the other departed ones gather round for a visit; and both they and he also might possibly become thirsty, and that is why he is given the wherewithal to slake their thirst. Anyone who knows the value which is placed on water in this region will understand why it seems important to the Indians to place some of this element at the disposal of the deceased, and will also be able to deduce that a bond of hospitality and fraternal feeling exists which continues even beyond the grave. Further more, our own pagan ancestors believed and practiced similar rites. M 764

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Chiefs and particularly famous witch doctors occupy positions of honor among the a'hot who await them, and their influence in the spirit world will be in proportion to the esteem in which they were held by their neighbors of which the funeral rites will be a yardstick. And so when one of them dies the Indians who are gathered about his bier beg him to bend every effort in their favor when he is far off among the a'hot, and try to influence the storm a'hot and the plague a'hot or the famine a'hot to pardon their villages and visit their enemies. The dying

1: Pelleschi- 111 C-5 (ca 1875) 1896 S17 Mataco S17
Chaco Indians S84

man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112

ness and misfortune. Thus the Choroti expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *möhsek* (spirit), and they therefore generally kill the child at once. The Mataco call their evil spirits *aittáh* and regard a monster as an *aittáh* personified. Similarly the Tobas believe that a sick child is possessed by a demon (*peyók*), or is itself such a demon, and owing to the close connection which there is between the child and its parents, this may entail unfortunate consequences for the parents also, nay, for the whole tribe.

Father Cardús relates that when among the Tobas a woman dies in child-birth, the new-born child is buried alive with its mother's body [1]). I do not believe that such a custom is practised by the Tobas of to-day, but it may well have existed formerly. A woman who dies in childbirth is always regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear, since the accident is explained as an operation of evil spirits to which the woman has fallen a victim. But the new-born child with its mother forms, as it were, one single personality; consequently the child also is regarded as being possessed. Besides, a sucking child which is bereft of its mother is also left without nutrition since, according to Indian ideas, a new-born babe can only be nourished with the milk of its own mother, and would thus die in any case.

We may of course also assume that practical considerations have led the Indians to infanticide. The Indians understand that a sickly or deformed child has scarcely any chance of developing into a strong man and a useful member of society. In the hard struggle for existence under which the Indian lives it may even be merciful to destroy him. I believe however that such considerations play only a subordinate part in the custom of infanticide, which must first of all be explained by superstition.

The same custom prevails with regard to *twins*. Among all tribes the second is generally killed. The birth of twins is among all Pilcomayo tribes looked upon as an unnatural and most ominous thing, since the Indians consider that one man cannot become the father of two children at once. The second, consequently, must be the offspring either of another man or of an evil spirit. Besides, the Indians say that a woman has not sufficient milk to nourish two babes at the same time, and from this point of view also twins are regarded as unlucky. The Indian woman, who has to work hard, is anxious not to bear more children than she is able to nourish and to take care of. In a Choroti family three or four

[1]) Cardús *op. cit.* p. 263.

845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

857 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [662] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," hush, "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizzines increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

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naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered. According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

Third case. A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was discovered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

164 "A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts 763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in 764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

●768 "On returning from the funeral all the equipment which belonged to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he [764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

765 "The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

M 556 M [351] M 428 768 C 577 M 177 577

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M C 764 M [535]

chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a »sign of sorrow», but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *náhsah* (= *eie sáhe*), i. e. »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M 764 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algaroba beer is most appreciated, but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly, the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba 512
Choroti SK6

relatives of the departed cannot live safely in it. This is the reason why in the Gran Chaco a traveller so often encounters remains of Indian villages which have evidently been burnt and abandoned by their inhabitants. The radical destruction of the whole village is always resorted to when several deaths have taken place at short intervals. The relatives of the deceased, when they abandon their own village, generally go and live with their relatives and friends in a neighbouring village, where they stay for some time, or until they decide to found a new settlement in some other part of the country. Custom requires that when the mourners arrive at the other village, they shall be received with wailing.

The Tobas, although they always burn the house where a death has taken place, do not as a rule deem it necessary to destroy the whole village. Similarly the relatives of the deceased generally remain there, building themselves a new dwelling; in other cases they leave the place for some time. The other inhabitants of the village, on the other hand, make no notable change in their mode of life, since they are not to the same extent exposed to danger from the death-spirit as the nearest relations.

Weeping and wailing plays an important part among the mourning ceremonies of the Indians, although it is always limited to the women and the children. The fact that wailing is ceremonial clearly appears from the circumstances under which it takes place. Although it is beyond doubt that the Indians are capable of real feelings of sorrow at the death of a near relation, yet their intense fear of death — including the fear of the dead body — is apparent throughout their mourning customs. The objects of the wailing seems to be partly to propitiate the spirit of the departed relative by showing him how deeply the survivors grieve at his death, partly to frighten away the death-demon by the noise. The latter point of view is probably the most important. Wailing is continued for several months after the death. The length of the wailing period varies according to the social importance of the deceased. A great chief is mourned in all tribes for longer than an ordinary member of the community, in some cases up to a whole year. As to the manner of wailing there is a marked distinction between the Tobas and the Mataco on the one hand, and the Choroti on the other. The wailing of the Toba women is like a greatly exaggerated loud crying and sobbing which is seemingly the expression of a desperate sorrow. The wailing of the Choroti women is calmer and more like the weeping of a child. Every lamentation consists of a series of sounds produced in a high falsetto voice and

764 companying themselves on rattles and drums. These laments last for about one hour after death, then begin again when the corpse is carried away to be buried and finally when they come back from the burial. But on the following day only very near relatives parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, go on weeping. Those who were already mourning for someone else weep louder than the others because they mourn for two.

765 The laments take place at sunrise and at sunset as well as in the middle of the afternoon. During the first days of mourning the near relatives of the deceased go to his home to mourn. There they run and dance, going continually [535] from one place to another and shaking their rattles with both hands. They accompany the dance with lamentations. With the exception of the wife of the deceased, women always mourn in this way, shaking rattles, dancing and lamentations. Mourning women must not appear bareheaded or with a naked face for they ought not to be seen. People [533] sing and play on rattles during the mourning period in order that the dead person may readily be forgotten. The laments which last two or three hours every day are supposed to help the living forget the dead. After six months, more or less, they weep only at dawn and even then very rarely. [302] The relatives of the dead person must cut off their hair in order not to displease the dead who would attack their heads and make them bald. The wife, at the death of her husband, observes mourning for two years. She shuts herself up in a special little hut often adjoining the hut of her married son, or daughter if she has no son.

● 768 The house of the deceased is pulled down and a new one built about 10 yards away. If this were not done the dead man would come back within fourteen days after death, attracted by memories of his previous life. The materials of the old house are used in the construction of the new one.

A widow may leave her home to satisfy her wants only at night. If she goes out during the day the dead man gets

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to g[illegible]re goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carri[illegible] over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

C M 175 462 [846] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the C M Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, [595] and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances C M towards a Spanish woman. . . .

175 [164] "Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the C M old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they [164] usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the C M shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while [771] memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- C M spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may 175 do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. 756 These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

C M 114 This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

727

during the night to celebrate the occasion.

It happened that the local Matacos returned about this time from the sugar harvest in the Salta plantations which were about seventy leagues from my camp, and it befell that every day, for some time, groups of Indians would station themselves at my door and ask me for a Toba head. I would let them have one, always repeating, as it were a refrain: "Toba catchia, catchia...." (bad, bad Toba), and they would go through the usual routine.

Chapter VIII

Religion

771 ●

The Chaco Indians have no God. I don't mean only that they do not conceive of God as a thinker or philosopher might but that they do not even conceive of one as do even untutored whites or Chinese.

[198] It is affirmed that the Pampas Indians do have a God, but this report must be considered as a recent importation and due to the continual contact of the Pampas with whites and with their brothers from over the mountains who were converted to Christianity shortly after the conquest.

But if the inhabitants of the Chaco do not know anything about God they nonetheless have their form of worship: the cult of spirits and of the stars.

I believe that there can be no doubt that the Chaco Indians are, generally speaking, as primitive as any of the world's other Indians and savages.

Now some philosopher-historians assure us that man's first religious stage is that of fetichism, which means the worship of fetiches, a word with which the Negroes of Africa signify the brute objects of their adoration.

Without denying that this may be or may have been the case where the Africans are concerned I nevertheless believe, at least regarding our Indians here, that the first stage in religion is not fetichism but spiritism of a sort which will later be described.

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, 771 ●
Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians 123
regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard 771
and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs. 776

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a'hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a'hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or [753]
are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a'hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a'hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among 164
them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down 775
into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

609 776 [551]

The Indians have great faith in the power of their a'hót. One of my Indian guides, Tajo ["slash" --Translator] by name (so called because he had a scar on his face) in order to prove to me the indubitable power of the a'hóts, and the crass ignorance of the whites who deny their existence, told me the following:

"It happened that a tribe was returning from a sugar plantation in the province of Salta. It was the season of algarrobo pods and one night all the people were celebrating, singing and dancing. Suddenly they became aware of the approach of a white man who was singing -- they could hear the noise made by the horse's hooves and by the large silver spurs.

"As soon as he arrived at the place where the people were gathered he halted and began to scold them for what they were doing, wishing to put a stop to their activity. The people did not like the white man's interference and said to the hayagüe ["witch doctor"--Translator] that he make him go away. The hayagüé, unable to bring this about by peaceful means said to the white who was insisting on stopping and profaning the celebration:

"'Now you will see if we are useless people and how strong is the a'hót.' He bent down, covered himself and shouted to the a'hót: 'Strike the white man down with an arrow and make him see if it is true that we are worthless people.' 'It is well,' answered the a'hót.

"Immediately a sound was heard coming up from beneath the ground, like the snapping of a stick. It was an arrow which had struck home. The white man suddenly slumped from off his horse. He was dead. The a'hót had shot the arrow into him because the white man had not wanted to believe in the a'hót."

771● 776

The whole tribe swears to have witnessed the whole thing.

It is remarkable that the object, if not of worship then at least of recognition, be of an evil nature; for in the last analysis the a'hót is nothing [203] if not an evil power or one capable of evil. If we wish to consider such a recognition as the first glimmering of a religion, then we must confess that religion has as its base, fear of evil and the desire to command it.

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./

771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
167 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
177 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
131 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They
197 occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
177 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

~ on a vowel indicates nasalization.
' on a vowel marks the accentuation.

As far as possible I tried to give the pronunciation of the region of Embarcación, though Pedro spoke another dialect.

A. THE UNIVERSE

1. The Upper and the Lower World (Pedro)

There are two worlds, one above and the other below. Once the world above our heads was in the place of the earth where we live. But the earth (still further) below did not like to be soiled by the excrement of the people dwelling in the sky and therefore it changed places with the earth above. Formerly sky and earth were connected by a big tree (*niLɔk*). The men of this earth climbed up it and went to hunt in the world above. Once a number of them climbed up and succeeded in killing a jaguar. When they divided the meat, they foolishly gave the stomach to an old man. He was so indignant at getting such a miserable portion that he burned the tree, thereby avenging himself. The men who had climbed up could not get down and they still live in the sky. They are a constellation formed by many stars (Pleiades: *patseLai*).

When these first people went to the sky to hunt, they left their children at home. A mother, knowing she would never again rejoin her child on earth, threw him from the sky a deer skin bag filled with honey. The children grew up, they were our fathers.

2. The Compartments of the World (Pedro)

The world is divided into three compartments; the earth the sky and the underworld. In the underworld there are fields like those we have here. The underworld is the abode of the dead. We know it is because we can go there in our dreams to visit our dead relatives. The medicine-men also

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

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know it. When the sun does not shine upon the earth, it goes down to the underworld. Then the stars and the moon climb out and shine on the earth.

B. DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD

3. The Great Flood (Pedro)

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The rainbow doesn't like menstruating women. Once a menstruating woman was killed and eaten by the rainbow. As a consequence there were heavy rains and a great flood. When the water receded large pools remained as witnesses of that flood.

4. The Great Fire (Pedro)

On the horizon at the end of the world, there are great fires that burn day and night with no one to tend them. On these fires are large pots in which food is always cooking. There is no one to put the pots on or to remove them. An old man who was travelling in that country saw the pots, but he was not allowed to go near them.

One must never speak of prairies with high grass as the fire would hear and spread itself through the world as it did once before. At that time it burned all the animals and plants. A man and a woman escaped by diving into the water and concealing themselves in the bed of a river. When they left the water they found nothing, not even a tree in whose shade they could sit. A little bird (*tapiatsón*) took his drum and started to beat it close to the stump of a *sopxwayúk* tree[1] just as the Matako do when the algarroba (Prosopis juliflora) is ripening. The trunk grew higher and higher until after a score of days it was a tree with leaves whose shade sheltered the new men. With the tree the forest began to grow again and after a while the world was

[1] In Spanish, *palo zapallo*

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house. 775

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region. [772]

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death. [787]

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire. [761]

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms. [821]

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see. 756 773

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

RELIGION.

CHAPTER XII.

Belief in gods and spirits in general.

I have mentioned before that the religion of the Chaco Indians is a subject strangely neglected by all who have travelled among these natives and studied their customs. Thus, in regard to the Tobas, the naturalist Azara arrived at the conclusion that they have no religion at all, and d'Orbigny rested satisfied with stating that »their religious beliefs are very limited», whereas the Catholic missionary Cardús considered the study of these things useless. Similarly, nothing — apart from the data published by myself — has been related of the religious ideas of the Choroti and Ashluslay. Almost the only author on the Chaco Indians who gives us some information about their religion is Barbrooke Grubb, but he deals exclusively with the ideas and customs of the Lenguas of Paraguay.

The main reason for this deficiency of our information respecting one of the most important sides of native culture is obvious. The subject of religion, if one has a real study of it in view, requires special training and a prolonged stay among the natives, and these conditions have been lacking in the case of most »ethnographic» travellers in the Chaco, not to speak of naturalists or ordinary travellers. But even to one who devotes special attention to the spiritual aspect of Indian culture the study of such a subject as religion is beset with great difficulties, and the study can hardly ever become exhaustive. Although this may undoubtedly be said of my own contribution also, I venture to believe that in the following account at any rate the most important religious ideas and customs of the Pilcomayo Indians are mentioned.

The lowest tribes of the Pilcomayo, the Choroti, Mataco, and — as far as I have been able to ascertain — the Ashluslay, have no belief in a supreme god, nor any ideas of a creation. Beliefs of this kind are extremely

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112
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rare in all South America, and in the Chaco they are found only among such an advanced tribe as the Tobas, and, in a certain sense, among the Lenguas. The latter Indians, according to Mr. Grubb, ascribe the creation of all things and of man to a being disguised as a beetle, but this being is without moral attributes and in fact is only of purely mythological interest. As to the Tobas, they believe in two high gods or Supreme Beings, who — just as is the case with the Creator-Beetle of the Lenguas — only figure in their mythology but play no rôle in their practical religion. Moreover, the ideas they entertain about these Supreme Beings are not consistent but seem to represent two different stages in the evolution of their religious thought. These beings are especially spoken of as the creators of the world and of mankind. According to the apparently older version, all things were made by a bad deity Kaloaraik, »The Evil One», who created the world as miserable and full of suffering as it actually is in the mind of the Tobas. Again, according to the younger version, the world owes its origin to a good deity Peritnalik, who created things good and useful and thenceforward took benevolent care of mankind.

Since no kind of worship is paid to these Supreme Beings they have more interest from a mythological than from a religious point of view. I shall therefore deal with them again in a later chapter in connection with other myths of the Tobas.

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In practical religion spirits of a lower order play the main rôle. Of these spirits some are in their nature good, others again bad, but — as is usual among savage peoples — the latter impress the mind of the Indians more than the former and are therefore more conspicuous in their religion. The Choroti call these spirits *möhsek*, the Ashluslay *eitché*, the Mataco *aittah* or *nahút*, and the Tobas *peyák*. In examining the different applications of this belief in spirits, we find that to the primitive Indians it is obviously of great practical importance: it compensates them for the lack of a notion of natural laws. Stupendous phenomena of nature, events otherwise unaccountable to them, especially disease and death, are explained as their mysterious actions. There are spirits inhabiting inanimate objects of nature and heavenly bodies, there are spirits embodied in animals and plants, and lastly, there are spirits who are not particularly attached to things animate or inanimate but have an independent existence, hovering about in the forests or on the plains, or in the air, causing such phenomena as thunder and lightning, eclipses of the sun and the moon, drought, devastating hurricanes, etc. Worst of course are those demons who are regarded as the causes of disease and death, and

3: Metraux
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[For myths and folklore, see pp. 9-89, category 116.]

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

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II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

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To pass through this darkness the medicine-man changes into a species of owl (*sinalčǫ́*). This is a bird who travels by night and whose eyes are like lanterns. In this disguise he is able to fly in the dark. After crossing the dark area he changes himself into a (white aquatic bird with red-circled eyes. When he arrives at the Big Fire's house he changes himself into a *carancho* and in this last disguise he calls on the Big Fire. They get acquainted and are very friendly. Later the *carancho* changes himself into a beautiful and well dressed woman. Big Fire is on good terms with the beautiful woman. Soon she becomes a man again. Big Fire asks the medicine-man if there is much bush in his country. The medicine-man takes care not to mention straw, bushes or trees, otherwise Big Fire will eat them up. The medicine-man goes home.

III. The Medicine-men

A man who wants to become a medicine-man must eat raw dog flesh. Ordinarily the candidate slays a young pup eats its flesh, and buries its head and skin very carefully.

Medicine dances are taught the prospective medicine-men by demons or spirits who give them their power. The *welán* are the spirits who are the most inclined to instruct men in the art of magic. The ordinary method in this procedure is as follows: The soul of a man is ravished by a *welán* and shut into a tree. There the man's soul remains captive and the *welán* teaches it the language of the spirit, then the *welán* blows on the prospective medicine-man and he thus acquires the power to treat sick people who come to him, using the same method. Medicine-men are constantly in touch with the spirits. They meet them at night and talk with them. The spirits have a stick called *laḳaaLoi* which contains their souls and this they give to their friends, the medicine-men.

Some women may acquire medical knowledge, but the Indians never consider them as smart as male doctors.

3 Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

may kill him. The snake's *ăhat* is called *punsoya* (perhaps Spanish-ponzoña : poison).

When a man is bitten by a snake he must kill the reptile and take it home in order to be cured rapidly. If he has been bitten while away from his home, he must dig a groove and put the snake into it, facing it in the opposite direction to that which he is taking. Thus the snake cannot enter him.

Tawkxwax taught the men the procedure to be followed in order to cure snake bites.

XII. How to Become a Singer

Those who want to become good singers must go to the bush and stay there for quite a long time. They must kill birds who are good singers and eat them after they have been made into powder and mixed with blood extracted from the arm. When they are in the bush they must first beat a drum, then run. Thus they will perhaps dream about a singing bird. When they wake up they must then take their drums and sing the song they heard in their dreams. One must not awaken until the song is finished or he will not remember it. Everyone has two songs and he must sing them every day in order to learn them. Ordinarily several young men go to the bush and after they have dreamed of a song they sing one after another. Generally three or four days are sufficient to master a song.

One must not sing someone else's song. If after one has eaten a bird he dreams of an iguana, it is no longer worth while to go on, for he will never become a good singer. The birds one dreams about and who teach one how to sing are not ordinary birds, they are *paata* (supernatural beings). The women do not know how to sing but they can cry when they have to mourn. Not all women know how to weep. In order to weep well, a woman must dream about another woman who is a good mourner. There are some exceptional women who can sing.

756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

"A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the 164 disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts 763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in 764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

"On returning from the funeral all the equipment which be- 768 longed to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he [764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

"The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night 765 following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

● 774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

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[774] some animal according to its merits in this life. They also recognize
776 with the name Ohott-at (1) (great spirit) a superior being who created

1. "O'hot" = spiritness; "tat" and "taj" = augmentative (J.P.)

them, but they do not worship this being at all. They are in great fear of an evil being who, wandering about at night, harms man, for which reason they call it Onnescilele (2) (night wanderer) and commit

2. "Onne" (hunat) = night; "sci" = locative; "léle" = patronimic (J.P.)

themselves to his service in order to win his good will."

XVI

Some Observations on the Previous Chapter

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114 The notes on appendix L written by Father Alejandro M.
101 Corrado are full of material of interest for this treatise. In them he establishes that "Matacos, Mataguayos and Noctenes are one and the same thing" explaining that in Salta they are called Matacos, and in Tarija Noctenes, while the Mataguayos themselves refer to themselves as Huenneyei.

According to the good Father the name Noctenes is a corruption of Octenai, a term used by the Chiriguayos to refer to these Indians. I find myself incompetent to argue this point about the origin of the name Noctenes; but since the Tobas and Guaycurúes owe it to the Guaraníes that they are known to us by their present names it would not be at all strange that a similar thing had happened in this case also.

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101 We are given to understand by this account that not everyone
114 calls the Mataguayos Noctenes, and one can understand that this is the cause of the disappearance of the Tonocoté nation. Tonocoté was a name limited to certain tribes only, but which doubtless was extended to many others, as far as language goes, because it was the first learned

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

● 774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

M T C 231 soon became skilled riders, but among the other Pilcomayo tribes they are rare. Before the Chaco Indian became acquainted with the white man, the dog was the only domestic animal known to him. These half-starved, fierce, and treacherous dogs are a real nuisance in the Mataco and the Choroti villages to the white traveller who has to stay among the Indians, because in their hunger they are always on the alert to rob him of edible things, among which they include not only his provisions, but also his saddlegear, boots, and other leather goods. Although the Mataco and the Choroti treat their numerous dogs badly and evidently have little use for them even as watches, yet in a way they regard them as members of the tribe. They never kill a dog, however old and wretched it may be, and when it dies they lament over it just as they lament over a fellow-tribesman. This curious practice is due to superstitious reasons, fear of the spirit of the dog. Like many other South American Indians, the natives of the Chaco believe that the souls of their dead tribesmen may reincarnate themselves in the dogs.

M C [774] M C [775]

Only the Tobas, who are culturally superior to the rest of the Pilcomayo tribes, feed their dogs properly and have real use for them both in hunting and as watchdogs. But even these dogs are of uncertain breed and by nature so savage that for my own part I failed in my attempts to train them according to European methods.

T 231

These general remarks on the material culture of the Pilcomayo tribes may suffice as a basis for the following description of their social customs and their intellectual culture. I shall repeatedly have occasion to touch upon the ergology of the Indians in describing their magical ornaments and amulets, as well as various objects used at religious ceremonies.

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

M 776 821 in drought, in eclipses, etc. Thunder and lightning, for instance, are caused by the demons called *aitták tavakái pählai* (the »thunder demons»), which pass in great numbers through the air or above the clouds. Eclipses of the moon, on the other hand, are attributed to a demon called *aitták hayáh* which is supposed to prey upon the moon. The Mataco try to frighten away both the thunder-demons and the demon eclipsing the moon by shouting loudly and making a noise, and by beating drums.

M 775 774 The same may be said of the nature of the *aitták* and the *nahút* as has been said of the *möhsek* of the Choroti. It seems to me probable that they are in their origin nothing but spirits of the dead or disembodied human souls. From this point of view, I believe, Pelleschi is right when he says that the religion of the Mataco can be characterized as essentially a worship of souls. But there are disembodied souls of different kinds. The Mataco word for »soul» is *kasītah*. It is the soul that detaches itself from the body, temporarily during dreams, permanently in death. As a death-spirit the *kasītah* is generally the object of fear. Of these death-spirits some, which are particularly evil-minded, become *nahút* or personifications of mortal diseases, whereas others have become personifications of curable illnesses and lesser evils. It is a well known fact that the spirits of certain persons — especially of sorcerers and persons who have died a violent death — are greatly feared, and just such spirits are likely to turn into that particular kind of demon whom the Mataco call *nahút*. The fact that graves are regarded as the dwelling-places of these demons confirms the conclusion that the *nahút* are in their nature nothing but disembodied human souls.

M [764]

T 776 As to the *T o b a s*, I have already mentioned that they call the spirits *peyák*. Like the Mataco, the Tobas fancy that these spirits appear in the shape of small boys (*nätolik*), and in daily life, when speaking of these beings, they more often use the word *nätolik* than the word *peyák*. Although the spirits in the main have human form, they at the same time resemble birds, and more particularly ostriches. At any rate the Tobas informed me that »the *peyák* have wings, large like those of the ostrich» — an idea quite natural to a people who even identify living men with ostriches. Still they are mostly invisible to the human eye; only the medicine-men who are endowed with a special clear-sightedness can see them and enter into communication with them. The whole world swarms with these mysterious beings, who are regarded as the causes of all evils that befall man. Everything that has been stated on this

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

171 are nourished will influence them physically as well as in character, and the Indians have no desire that their children should in any way acquire the natures of such animals.[1])

262 826 774 The fear of eating the *heads* of certain animals is probably due to similar ideas. A menstruous woman, as we have seen, is forbidden to eat the head of a parrot, lest she should go mad or be changed into a tiger; and similarly a father, while he is observing the rules of the couvade, must abstain from eating the head of a cow. According to primitive belief the soul or vital power of the body is particularly concentrated in the hair and the head. That the head of a cow is especially regarded as taboo is comprehensible from the fact that animals imported by the whites are generally looked upon with superstitious fear and their flesh avoided by Indians still living in a state of nature.

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[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* p. 137.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter XVIII.

Ideas of future life and funeral ceremonies.

Although the Chaco Indians certainly do not believe in the »immortality of the soul» — an expression often abused, especially by Christian missionaries — they all believe in the continued existence of the soul after death. Their ideas about the future life are much the same as those found among most primitive peoples. Man is, as it were, a double being; in the visible body there resides an ethereal shadow-like being, mostly invisible, which is its life-essence and the particular seat of which is the chest. That the soul is thought of as being in its nature a shadow-like form appears especially from the name given it by the Tobas: *kudepakál*, which means »our (*i. e.* the human) shadow». The Choroti usually speak of »the dead one» (*yál*) whereas the Mataco call the soul *kasītah*, a word the etymology of which is obscure. When man is asleep this ethereal being is believed to have left its abode for the moment, and what he experiences in his dreams is believed to be really experienced by the soul during its wanderings. When he awakes it returns to the body. In death, on the other hand, the soul has left its abode for ever. This is the work of the evil demon who entered into the body causing disease and death.

Leaving its bodily frame at the moment of death, the soul is set free to an active and independent existence and changed into a supernatural being of whom the Indians as a rule stand in great fear. According to the ideas they have of the existence and activity of the soul after its separation from the body, the mysterious spirit at first hovers about its old abode, the dead body, and the house where the departed lived, being then particularly dangerous to the surviving relatives. The danger is greatest before the corpse has been buried. The Indians also fancy that the soul follows the body to the grave, and their burial

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

765 551 Chaco tribes. These savages as a rule are very reluctant to mention their true Indian names. Thus, as I have mentioned before, when the Chaco Indians visit the whites they nearly always assume names for use instead of their real names. If the Indians are thus careful with the names of the living, those of the dead are particularly regarded as taboo and must never be mentioned, especially by the nearest relatives. When I asked one of my Indian friends about the name of a man who had just died, he hesitated for a moment, looked round, and when he saw that no one of the relatives was near, he *whispered* the name in my ear. This superstition, I believe, is ultimately based on the idea, held by all Indians, that *the soul of a person is inherent in his name*. To know a person's name is therefore the same as to have his soul in one's power, and supernatural influences can be exerted upon him through this invisible part of his personality, just as they can be exerted through a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail. If the soul is believed to be in the name, we can easily understand why the names of the dead are especially taboo. To mention it is the same as to enter into close contact with the departed soul itself, to which the infection of death is attached, and this is supposed to entail unfortunate consequences, at least for the nearest relatives. For an outsider there is evidently not the same personal danger. But since a person may be controlled and conjured through his name, it is further believed that the rest of the dead in the grave may be disturbed by mentioning his name. It is therefore considered a dreadful indiscretion against the relatives to speak of the deceased by name. This is the idea prevailing both among the Tobas and among other Chaco tribes. Generally the Indians do not like to speak about the dead at all, and if they do, their tacit maxim is: *de mortuis nil nisi bene*. The relatives would never admit that they fear a dead parent and regard him as malicious. They always pronounce him to be »good», as if believing that by such a euphemism they may change his character or paralyse the harmful effects arising from him.

[774] [795]

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NOTES

I. The Spirits of the Dead

1) *Husek* (*o-husek* or *no-husek* = my soul) is the »god» we have inside of us when we are living. This spirit goes away when we dream. It does not reside in any particular organ but is everywhere in our body. It is through the *husek* that we know what is going to happen. When we die the *husek* becomes an *āhat*, when the *āhat* dies it becomes a bird called *xwitson*. The *xwitson* becomes an *katak* fly and the fly a *ḳipḳip* bird, the *ḳipḳip* becomes a spider (*xwistę́*) and the *xwistę́* becomes a bat (*asus*) and then disappears.

2) The love spirit is called *soitayax*. She is beautiful, all adorned with necklaces and bracelets, exactly like a woman falling in love. She is very fond of men and it is she who commands women to love. When a woman leaves her husband and goes to another man, it is because her soul has tired of the first husband. In the same way a man takes another wife, his soul craves a change.

3) Now and then the *āhat* comes back shortly after death. In such cases, he is very bad. His eyes are yellow. If an *āhat* comes back he goes directly to the house where women are alone, generally the women become frightened and run away. The *āhat* like to sleep with women. They tell them that they are going to bathe and that they will come back very clean and good-looking.[1]

4) At times the spirit comes back to visit his grave, but this only occurs a few days after death, before he has had time to go to his family house in the underworld.

5) The soul goes to the abode of the dead riding a beautiful horse, well-saddled and carrying all that is necessary for the trip. The soul also drives in a car, from one village to another and wanders everywhere. On his way to the land

[1] It is said that the *āhat* are dirty, but my informant was not of that opinion. He told me that all the *āhat* he had seen were clean and beautiful.

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The medicine-man always knows beforehand when the red grasshopper (*čol*) will come. The striped grasshopper (*talesai*) lives inside a kind of very big gourd (*wotsotáx*). The grasshoppers belong to a master who sends them everywhere. During the summer they are out but at the first cold weather, they return to their squash.

Each year in the month of August, the medicine-men have a ceremony in order to go and see the *lachiwana* bees to ask them to come down to earth once more. For this event the medicine-men snuff *hatax* powder. They go up where the mother of all bees lives. She is as large as a house. To reach her the medicine-men transform themselves into *aguara-guasu* (*Canis jubatus*). The mother of the bees requires presents since she is afraid that by burning the old prairies her children might get burned too.

If someone speaks ill of a medicine-man, the latter's familiar spirit may enter the offender's body and thus avenge the insult. The soul of the medicine-man (*táxumit*) is ferocious. When the medicine-man is at odds with someone, his *táxumit* inflicts illness on the person with whom he is angry and no one except the medicine-man is able to cure the victim. It is wise therefore to stay on good terms with medicine-men.

IV. The Sun and the Medicine-men

The medicine-men may go and visit the Sun, Moon, the Night, the Rain and the Big Fire to make friends with them. During these trips they always go in gangs led by an older man who is expert in the difficult art of overcoming the numerous obstacles they meet on the way. He is the spiritual father of the younger medicine-men. If wandering medicine-men meet those of other villages, they fight and the spirits of those wounded or killed during the trips will be sick or will die on earth, for all that happens to the spirit must inevitably happen to the body. Medicine-men never fight on earth, and only while under the influence of *hatax* do

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

XIII. The Diseases

753 The diseases are demons which have the appearence of
776 men but are invisible. They wear feathers like medicine-
men. Smallpox for instance is especially ugly. His head
755 is swollen and full of small holes. He lives not for from Salta, in a cave on a big mountain. The demons of disease live under the ground or within the *yuchanes*. They leave their shelter to enter men and make them sick. In order to get them out of the bodies of sick people one must ask them what they want, for the demons always want something. One has to say, »What do you want?» The demon answers, »Food, dresses, a gun.» All these things are to be given him. But they are equally satisfied with only the sight of these things and men may very well eat the food or make use of the things whose essence the demons have received. It would be very dangerous to eat of a dish before the demon has helped himself. Men dance in order to scare a demon or chase him away. The demon is obliged to participate in the dancing and gets tired. When those who take part in a treatment have danced for a while, the magician speaks to the disease. The disease asks whether they are angry with him. The medicine-man answers, »No, we are dancing as usual.» The disease then says, »Then let us not dance any longer, for I am to dance to-morrow too.»

753 Each thing has its *husék* (spirit) or image and it is this
774 image which the disease requires after he has stolen or entered the soul of the man and it is this soul which the medicine-man has gone to get. During the first part of all medical ceremonies, the medicine-man's spirit goes to the disease and asks him which things he wants in return for the sick man's soul.

[124] One of the reasons why the Matako always require payment to let themselves be photographed is that by photographing them one takes their image (spirit) and thus may hurt them. The money they get for the photograph may eventually

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serve to pay the medicine-man in case something happens to them. 753 774

The ceremonial objects whose spirit the disease takes away do not become any weaker, since they may be used directly afterwards.

Even though the disease has been given food, he remains insatiable and wants more. He also wants to take away the things he is offered, that is the reason why the medicine-man is obliged to blow on the objects lest the disease should stick to them. When the disease does not get what he wants, he becomes angry and kills his victim.

The disease, or a bad spirit, introduces into the body of the sick person small sticks, usually objects which will make him feel pain. The medicine-man has to take them away by sucking the aching parts and he blows the patient to get the sicknes out of his body. Before treating a patient a medicine-man adorns himself with feathers in order to look like disease or the demon who caused it. The diseases and the spirits are very fond of these ornaments and enjoy seeing them on those who cure the patient. 753 755

When the malady is not very serious, the patient is treated within his hut for economical reasons. To determine whether or not the patient is to be decorated depends upon the seriousness of his case. The medicine-man and the patient get under the same blanket and the former speaks to the disease. Thus the audience is not too large and the disease is easier to cope with. Sometimes it is satisfied with a quart of alcohol. A sick child is always cured inside the house, except when there is an organized ceremony through which they can profit toward the end. 755

According to the Indians vaccine exerts a powerful action against the disease and he can no longer attack the individuals thus vaccinated. Shots fired at the end of the ceremony puts the disease to flight and prevents him from desiring the gun with which one assistant danced. To keep away sickness it is good to hang the carapace of a *tatu* 751

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of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *ãxǫ̃tĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [292] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mɨsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/214 cont./

755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the [533] [535] rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[774] [776] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

755
554

(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs.

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a'hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a'hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a'hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a'hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

consideration in proportion to what was his while he was alive and amongst his neighbors of his own village. This belief causes them to show great reverence for those of their number who have died. 775

Despite the a'hóts' inclination for wandering about, they yet ever remain in the vicinity of the place where the bodies to which they belonged died.

The soul of a person who dies in a foreign place and who has not been given burial in his home territory, is condemned to wander alone, despised and sad in the midst of the souls of strangers.

I asked my guide why it was that fortune was so cruel with those wretches who, through no fault of their own, died and left their bodies far from their native place; to which he answered: "The mere fact of these bodies having been left abandoned in a far off place by their companions and by the sons of the same tribe, was a sign that while they were alive they had not enjoyed the love and esteem of the others. The foreign a'hóts on seeing the soul of an outsider make an appearance amongst them reason in this way: 'if the person to whom this soul belonged was not honored by his companions or by the sons of his own tribe, nor given burial befitting a brother, then he was neither loved nor esteemed by his own people.' This being so, then they also shun him and leave him alone." I only repeat the rascal's words. 766

This reminds me of the veneration which the peoples of all nations accord to their burial grounds, and, in this matter of the souls of the unburied being condemned to wander, these Indians have the same beliefs as the ancient Romans according to what Virgil so beautifully expresses in the Aenead.

These beliefs are the basis of the ceremonies to cure the sick and to bury the dead.

But before entering upon their description I must call attention to a sort of star cult, especially amongst the women. These heavenly bodies are the moon and the morning star. 821 795

When the moon rises the women leave their huts and, holding hands, form a circle and begin to wheel rapidly, jumping and shouting in honor of the silvery moon.

They do the same thing when the morning star appears on the eastern horizon, and pray to it that the algarrobo pod crop and other wild fruits may be abundant.

C
766 The bodies of those who have been executed for repeated murder are flung out on the ground or else burned.

Some Indians, among them the Chirionoses (1) who live on

1. Tribes of the Chiriguano type. (Ed.)

the Bolivian or Brazilian frontiers, bury their dead in the trunks of trees. To this end they go into the thickest parts of the forest, choose out a yuchan tree, which has a bottle shaped trunk and is as soft as cork, fell it and place the corpse inside it, covering it over well to keep the crows from getting at it. When the Fort Sarmiento road was opened up a short time ago one of these burial trees was found, quite by chance.

M
764 The Matacos make a practice of burying their dead under ground, although some tribes, those towards the east who live close to the Tobas, burn them. This practice, one would suppose, is one which they have in common with the Tobas.

It is to be supposed that the beliefs held by the Matacos in this matter of interment are also held by the other wild Indians with whom they are continually in fighting contact, either as allies or as enemies, and with whom they share the same spirit cult.

M
775 Now the Matacos, as has been said, believe that the soul of the dead has no rest until the body has been buried within tribal territory. I have no reason to believe that an exception is made for those who die in battle. They believe also that the soul, which they call "hésék" (they give the name of "tzan" to the body, and "hót" to a corpse) does not descend into the earth to be with its companions until the body has decomposed, either by rot or by fire. They say that until this happens the soul wanders about around the family hut, sometimes becoming visible and complaining about its lot.

M
521 This business of the appearance of souls (or ghosts) and their cries of lamentation is the subject of a great deal of foolish old wives' tales among them, almost to the point of their not talking about anything else, and I would wager that it is the cause of as much fright among them as it is amongst us.

do, or in white garments as do the Chinese; but they show in their own way that they are in mourning by shaving their heads which are the only parts of their bodies with covering. The women, instead of parading themselves about in their somber garb in churches and public places, hide themselves away in their huts and avoid all contact with their neighbors; they refrain absolutely from talking and apply themselves more diligently to their household duties. They continue in this mourning for a year, during which time it is not proper for them to remarry. Whenever they must needs go out they take the most secluded paths and if one should chance to meet them they cover their faces; they will not talk on any account and avoid any occasion for doing so. It happened that travelers [208] who have met up by chance, in out-of-the-way and therefore suspect places, with women like these who are withdrawn and will not speak, have mistreated and even killed them, being ignorant of the custom.

In addition to shaving their heads they also wail -- a monotonous expressionless chant -- which is apparently dictated by convention and accompanied by the beating of the "pin-pin" which, as I believe I have already said, is a mortar hollowed out of a tree trunk with a tool or with fire. Water is poured into this mortar and then a skin is stretched tightly over it to form a sort of drum. They beat upon this skin with a gourd filled with grains of corn or algarrobo seeds.

They wail in unison at certain stipulated hours, but the widow or mother does so without ceasing, even when she walks through the streets about her business. Relatives and friends accompany the deceased to the grave, and if he be a well loved chief or some famous witch doctor then the whole tribe will go.

Chiefs and particularly famous witch doctors occupy positions of honor among the a'hot who await them, and their influence in the spirit world will be in proportion to the esteem in which they were held by their neighbors of which the funeral rites will be a yardstick. And so when one of them dies the Indians who are gathered about his bier beg him to bend every effort in their favor when he is far off among the a'hot, and try to influence the storm a'hot and the plague a'hot or the famine a'hot to pardon their villages and visit their enemies. The dying

C
M 763 775 554 766 550

man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

M
C 755 753 [756]

In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a'hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

M
C 648 755

Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

M T C 231 soon became skilled riders, but among the other Pilcomayo tribes they are rare. Before the Chaco Indian became acquainted with the white man, the dog was the only domestic animal known to him. These half-starved, fierce, and treacherous dogs are a real nuisance in the Mataco and the Choroti villages to the white traveller who has to stay among the Indians, because in their hunger they are always on the alert to rob him of edible things, among which they include not only his provisions, but also his saddlegear, boots, and other leather goods. Although the Mataco and the Choroti treat their numerous dogs badly and evidently have little use for them even as watches, yet in a way they regard them as members of the tribe. They never kill a dog, however old and wretched it may be, and when it dies they lament over it just as they lament over a fellow-tribesman. This curious practice is due to superstitious reasons, fear of the spirit of the dog. Like many other South American Indians, the natives of the Chaco believe that the souls of their dead tribesmen may reincarnate themselves in the dogs.

M C [774]

M C [775]

T 231 Only the Tobas, who are culturally superior to the rest of the Pilcomayo tribes, feed their dogs properly and have real use for them both in hunting and as watchdogs. But even these dogs are of uncertain breed and by nature so savage that for my own part I failed in my attempts to train them according to European methods.

000 These general remarks on the material culture of the Pilcomayo tribes may suffice as a basis for the following description of their social customs and their intellectual culture. I shall repeatedly have occasion to touch upon the ergology of the Indians in describing their magical ornaments and amulets, as well as various objects used at religious ceremonies.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI/2

M 776 821 in drought, in eclipses, etc. Thunder and lightning, for instance, are caused by the demons called *aittáh tavakái pählai* (the »thunder demons»), which pass in great numbers through the air or above the clouds. Eclipses of the moon, on the other hand, are attributed to a demon called *aittáh hayáh* which is supposed to prey upon the moon. The Mataco try to frighten away both the thunder-demons and the demon eclipsing the moon by shouting loudly and making a noise, and by beating drums.

M 775 774 The same may be said of the nature of the *aittáh* and the *nahút* as has been said of the *möhsek* of the Choroti. It seems to me probable that they are in their origin nothing but spirits of the dead or disembodied human souls. From this point of view, I believe, Pelleschi is right when he says that the religion of the Mataco can be characterized as essentially a worship of souls. But there are disembodied souls of different kinds. The Mataco word for »soul» is *kasïtah*. It is the soul that detaches itself from the body, temporarily during dreams, permanently in death. As a death-spirit the *kasïtah* is generally the object of fear. Of these death-spirits some, which are particularly evil-minded, become *nahút* or personifications of mortal diseases, whereas others have become personifications of curable illnesses and lesser evils. It is a well known fact that the spirits of certain persons — especially of sorcerers and persons who have died a violent death — are greatly feared, and just such spirits are likely to turn into that particular kind of demon whom the Mataco call *nahút*. The M [764] fact that graves are regarded as the dwelling-places of these demons confirms the conclusion that the *nahút* are in their nature nothing but disembodied human souls.

T 776 As to the *T o b a s*, I have already mentioned that they call the spirits *peyák*. Like the Mataco, the Tobas fancy that these spirits appear in the shape of small boys (*nätolik*), and in daily life, when speaking of these beings, they more often use the word *nätolik* than the word *peyák*. Although the spirits in the main have human form, they at the same time resemble birds, and more particularly ostriches. At any rate the Tobas informed me that »the *peyák* have wings, large like those of the ostrich» — an idea quite natural to a people who even identify living men with ostriches. Still they are mostly invisible to the human eye; only the medicine-men who are endowed with a special clear-sightedness can see them and enter into communication with them. The whole world swarms with these mysterious beings, who are regarded as the causes of all evils that befall man. Everything that has been stated on this

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter XVIII.

Ideas of future life and funeral ceremonies.

Although the Chaco Indians certainly do not believe in the »immortality of the soul» — an expression often abused, especially by Christian missionaries — they all believe in the continued existence of the soul after death. Their ideas about the future life are much the same as those found among most primitive peoples. Man is, as it were, a double being; in the visible body there resides an ethereal shadow-like being, mostly invisible, which is its life-essence and the particular seat of which is the chest. That the soul is thought of as being in its nature a shadow-like form appears especially from the name given it by the Tobas: *kadepakál*, which means »our (*i. e.* the human) shadow». The Choroti usually speak of »the dead one» (*yál*) whereas the Mataco call the soul *kasitah*, a word the etymology of which is obscure. When man is asleep this ethereal being is believed to have left its abode for the moment, and what he experiences in his dreams is believed to be really experienced by the soul during its wanderings. When he awakes it returns to the body. In death, on the other hand, the soul has left its abode for ever. This is the work of the evil demon who entered into the body causing disease and death.

Leaving its bodily frame at the moment of death, the soul is set free to an active and independent existence and changed into a supernatural being of whom the Indians as a rule stand in great fear. According to the ideas they have of the existence and activity of the soul after its separation from the body, the mysterious spirit at first hovers about its old abode, the dead body, and the house where the departed lived, being then particularly dangerous to the surviving relatives. The danger is greatest before the corpse has been buried. The Indians also fancy that the soul follows the body to the grave, and their burial

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

M 115 customs in fact seem particularly to aim at interring the soul with the body. Later on, it is thought, the soul leaves for the forests and the plains, or rises towards the sky, becoming one of those innumerable demons who people the spiritual world of the Indians.

T 115 172 This belief prevails among all Chaco tribes. None of the more primitive Indians, neither the Choroti, nor the Mataco nor the Ashluslay, have developed ideas about a hades, a realm of the dead, where the souls of the departed are assembled. Such a belief is only encountered among the Tobas, the most advanced of the Pilcomayo tribes, who nevertheless at the same time keep to the primitive notion about a soul following the dead body to the grave. When a man dies, the Tobas told me, his »good spirit» (*peyák nōtta*) takes his soul (*kadepakál*) to the Paradise of the Indians. This Paradise is in the heavens and is called *Piyim* (*piyim* = heaven). It is situated in the east where the sun rises. The *Piyim* does not, however, altogether coincide with the sky. It is farther off, *above* the sky, for »upon the visible heaven the sun dies at night, but in the happy resting-place of the dead Tobas the sun never dies». Night and darkness do not exist there, day and sunshine continually reign. In the *piyim* there are great villages and nice houses, fish and other eatables abound, the men are constantly drinking algarobabeer and maizebeer. Disease and death and other evils which embitter the earthly life do not exist there. The men also marry and beget children there, for both men and women are taken to *Piyim* after death. — In short, in the ideas which the Tobas entertain of a Paradise or realm of the dead we find a simple idealisation of earthly conditions. As the Tobas themselves expressed their view on this point: since the earthly life is connected with so many evils we imagine that the future life must be so much better and happier.

I may add that ideas of the Tobas about a Paradise and the future destiny of the soul have nothing to do with moral considerations. Every Toba is taken to *Piyim* after death, independently of the good or bad character he showed during life. Likewise, his social position makes no difference in his destiny after death.

T 171 177 Whereas the Tobas are the only tribe on the Pilcomayo which has developed a theory about a special resting-place for the dead, the half-civilized Avas in the north have similar ideas of the destiny of the soul after death. The Paradise of the Avas is called Ibuoca; it is a sort of »happy fields» where the departed souls go and where they lead a joyous life, feasting and drinking maize beer. Since the Bolivian Tobas have

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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the death-spirit from rising from the grave. The Tobas believe that if shortly after the burial the body is exhumed, the spirit will come out and may transform himself into a tiger which will kill the people. But the latter may sometimes happen even without any particular profanation of the burial-place.

The customs here described with particular reference to the Tobas are typical of the burial customs of the Pilcomayo tribes in general. Thus the Choroti and the Mataco as a rule bury the corpse in a seated or reclining posture as do the Tobas. There are however exceptions to this rule, and at least in one case which came under my notice the dead Choroti man had been buried in a lying posture. At each end of the grave had been placed a clay pot, partly filled with water. The idea underlying this arrangement was not quite clear. Since among the Indians supernatural power is frequently ascribed to clay pots, it is probable that they had been placed on the tomb for some superstitious reasons, perhaps with a view to keeping off the death-demon. I may add that among the Chaco Indians offerings of food and drink, or other kinds of offering, are not generally made to the spirits of the departed. Certain traces of food and drink offerings have been found among the Mataco, but on the whole we may say that the cult of the dead, which plays such an important part in the religion of most South American Indians, is unknown to the natives of the Gran Chaco. When I asked the Choroti whether they would not offer food and drink to the spirit of an Indian who had recently been buried, they laughed and answered: »He is dead, he wants no food». Still of course neither the Choroti nor other Chaco Indians have wholly divested their minds of the primitive idea that in the after-life the soul has to a certain extent the same wants and appetites as in this earthly life.

As a rule the place where a person has been buried is not, among the Choroti and the Mataco, marked by any tomb or heap of earth thrown up over the grave. Some tribes, however, at any rate the Choroti, are in the habit of constructing, over the place, a primitive kind of hut, consisting of a roof of twigs and grass resting upon four poles. The hut is said to be »the habitation of the *móhsek*». Chiefs and old family fathers are particularly honoured in this way after death.

The customs practised immediately after a death are in their main features the same in all Chaco tribes. The Choroti, as soon as the sick Indian has drawn his last breath, start to make a tremendous noise with all sorts of rattles and by shouting and wailing. The medicine-men

NOTES

I. The Spirits of the Dead

1) *Husek* (*o-husek* or *no-husek* = my soul) is the »god» we have inside of us when we are living. This spirit goes away when we dream. It does not reside in any particular organ but is everywhere in our body. It is through the *husek* that we know what is going to happen. When we die the *husek* becomes an *āhat*, when the *āhat* dies it becomes a bird called *xwitson*. The *xwitson* becomes an *katak* fly and the fly a *ḳipḳip* bird, the *ḳipḳip* becomes a spider (*xwistę́*) and the *xwistę́* becomes a bat (*asus*) and then disappears.

2) The love spirit is called *soitayax*. She is beautiful, all adorned with necklaces and bracelets, exactly like a woman falling in love. She is very fond of men and it is she who commands women to love. When a woman leaves her husband and goes to another man, it is because her soul has tired of the first husband. In the same way a man takes another wife, his soul craves a change.

3) Now and then the *āhat* comes back shortly after death. In such cases, he is very bad. His eyes are yellow. If an *āhat* comes back he goes directly to the house where women are alone, generally the women become frightened and run away. The *āhat* like to sleep with women. They tell them that they are going to bathe and that they will come back very clean and good-looking.[1]

4) At times the spirit comes back to visit his grave, but this only occurs a few days after death, before he has had time to go to his family house in the underworld.

5) The soul goes to the abode of the dead riding a beautiful horse, well-saddled and carrying all that is necessary for the trip. The soul also drives in a car, from one village to another and wanders everywhere. On his way to the land

[1] It is said that the *āhat* are dirty, but my informant was not of that opinion. He told me that all the *āhat* he had seen were clean and beautiful.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house. 775

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region. [772]

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death. [787]

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire. [761]

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms. [821]

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see. 756 773

The medicine-men who have snuffed the powder of *sebil* seeds (*natax*) and gone into a trance see everything, especially the disease demons. They also see bad medicine-men. When in this state they may also call on the spirits of the dead (*āhat*). Such visits to the dead may sometimes help to cure a patient, for if it is the spirit of a dead person who caused the sickness, he can also take it away. A medicine-man has to pay the disease demon when he cures somebody and so he in turn charges the patient. The fees of a medicine-man are extremely high. My informant Pedro, for instance, has paid a poncho (value of 18 pesos) for being cured of snake bite. If the patient dies, the medicine-man is not entitled to a fee, even a very small one. However, his professional fame is not lessened.

If a medicine-man has not succeeded in effecting a cure, another one is called in, but then the task is more difficult as the disease has lost its temper. It is also important to call the right specialist. Certain doctors have acquired fame for curing particular diseases. Snake bites are usually treated by special medicine-men.

When medicine-men perform magical rites, a very big tree covered with green leaves, similar to those of a palm tree and also extremely thick, appears before them. This tree always emits a noise which only medicine-men perceive. If this same tree appears to the medicine-men without leaves and quite dry, it presages death for him. He then knows that he has only one year to live. Through magic the medicine-man knows when his last moment is near. He has only to let the tree come. When his time arrives the magic tree comes down from the sky, stops at a certain height above the ground near the medicine-man, who throws himself on the ground, and as soon as he has breathed his last the tree gets up and bursts »like a bomb«. It is the end for the medicine-man and the tree. The soul of the dead medicine-man goes to the sky to the place where the tree had been.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *ăxǫ̂tĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

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[774] some animal according to its merits in this life. They also recognize
776 with the name Ohott-at (1) (great spirit) a superior being who created

1. "O'hot" = spiritness; "tat" and "taj" = augmentative (J.P.)

them, but they do not worship this being at all. They are in great fear of an evil being who, wandering about at night, harms man, for which reason they call it Onnescilele (2) (night wanderer) and commit

2. "Onne" (hunat) = night; "sci" = locative; "léle" = patronimic (J.P.)

themselves to his service in order to win his good will."

XVI

Some Observations on the Previous Chapter

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114 The notes on appendix L written by Father Alejandro M.
101 Corrado are full of material of interest for this treatise. In them he establishes that "Matacos, Mataguayos and Noctenes are one and the same thing" explaining that in Salta they are called Matacos, and in Tarija Noctenes, while the Mataguayos themselves refer to themselves as Huenneyei.

According to the good Father the name Noctenes is a corruption of Octenai, a term used by the Chiriguayos to refer to these Indians. I find myself incompetent to argue this point about the origin of the name Noctenes; but since the Tobas and Guaycurúes owe it to the Guaraníes that they are known to us by their present names it would not be at all strange that a similar thing had happened in this case also.

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101 We are given to understand by this account that not everyone
114 calls the Mataguayos Noctenes, and one can understand that this is the cause of the disappearance of the Tonocoté nation. Tonocoté was a name limited to certain tribes only, but which doubtless was extended to many others, as far as language goes, because it was the first learned

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new
791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance,
776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a
846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which
[753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, 771
Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians 123
regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard 771
and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs. 776

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or [753]
are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among 164
them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down 775
into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with a terrible noise and blinding flash of light.

Whatever the case may actually be it would seem that the wandering life led by the wild tribes of the Chaco must needs exclude the possibility of idolatry.

How could a tribe continually on the move load itself down with the kitchen gardens required to grow the onions and garlic of the Egyptians? It seems logical that anything bulky and cumbersome would have to be eliminated. How could they worship gods who were loaded upon the rumps of horses, or other mean and vile places, or tied to ropes and whipped in order that they remain docile and not abandon the tribe while on the march?

[201] Or how could its prestige and terrible mystery be preserved amidst the pellmell confusion of constant relocation? And how could each one be thinking about his daily bread while on the march and also on the discredit on both gods and priests should they be made prisoners and destroyed by some enemy in ambush? Idolatry would therefore necessarily be directed toward small objects requiring little care; but these are the very last to draw worshipful attention and never actually do so unless they are a marginal part of a much larger religious context, sparks of the unsatiated caprice of common adoration such as the little intercessory saints kept in certain of our families for their private use.

Apart from this the notorious ease with which the Indians abandon their tribe, their chief and their witch doctors, together with the practically nonexistent prestige of the two latter except during wartime or when some danger threatens, confirms the preceding arguments.

Chapter IX

Religion (continued)

For these Indians God or the devil are one and the same 776 and they give them the same name which, as has already been

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The Indians have great faith in the power of their a'hót. One of my Indian guides, Tajo ["slash" --Translator] by name (so called because he had a scar on his face) in order to prove to me the indubitable power of the a'hóts, and the crass ignorance of the whites who deny their existence, told me the following:

"It happened that a tribe was returning from a sugar plantation in the province of Salta. It was the season of algarrobo pods and one night all the people were celebrating, singing and dancing. Suddenly they became aware of the approach of a white man who was singing -- they could hear the noise made by the horse's hooves and by the large silver spurs.

"As soon as he arrived at the place where the people were gathered he halted and began to scold them for what they were doing, wishing to put a stop to their activity. The people did not like the white man's interference and said to the hayagüe ["witch doctor"--Translator] that he make him go away. The hayagüe, unable to bring this about by peaceful means said to the white who was insisting on stopping and profaning the celebration:

"'Now you will see if we are useless people and how strong is the a'hót.' He bent down, covered himself and shouted to the a'hót: 'Strike the white man down with an arrow and make him see if it is true that we are worthless people.' 'It is well,' answered the a'hót.

"Immediately a sound was heard coming up from beneath the ground, like the snapping of a stick. It was an arrow which had struck home. The white man suddenly slumped from off his horse. He was dead. The a'hót had shot the arrow into him because the white man had not wanted to believe in the a'hót."

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The whole tribe swears to have witnessed the whole thing.

It is remarkable that the object, if not of worship then at least of recognition, be of an evil nature; for in the last analysis the a'hót is nothing [203] if not an evil power or one capable of evil. If we wish to consider such a recognition as the first glimmering of a religion, then we must confess that religion has as its base, fear of evil and the desire to command it.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S/12

ness and misfortune. Thus the Choroti expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *möhsek* (spirit), and they therefore generally kill the child at once. The Mataco call their evil spirits *aittáh* and regard a monster as an *aittáh* personified. Similarly the Tobas believe that a sick child is possessed by a demon (*peyák*), or is itself such a demon, and owing to the close connection which there is between the child and its parents, this may entail unfortunate consequences for the parents also, nay, for the whole tribe.

Father Cardús relates that when among the Tobas a woman dies in child-birth, the new-born child is buried alive with its mother's body [1]). I do not believe that such a custom is practised by the Tobas of to-day, but it may well have existed formerly. A woman who dies in childbirth is always regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear, since the accident is explained as an operation of evil spirits to which the woman has fallen a victim. But the new-born child with its mother forms, as it were, one single personality; consequently the child also is regarded as being possessed. Besides, a sucking child which is bereft of its mother is also left without nutrition since, according to Indian ideas, a new-born babe can only be nourished with the milk of its own mother, and would thus die in any case.

We may of course also assume that practical considerations have led the Indians to infanticide. The Indians understand that a sickly or deformed child has scarcely any chance of developing into a strong man and a useful member of society. In the hard struggle for existence under which the Indian lives it may even be merciful to destroy him. I believe however that such considerations play only a subordinate part in the custom of infanticide, which must first of all be explained by superstition.

The same custom prevails with regard to *twins*. Among all tribes the second is generally killed. The birth of twins is among all Pilcomayo tribes looked upon as an unnatural and most ominous thing, since the Indians consider that one man cannot become the father of two children at once. The second, consequently, must be the offspring either of another man or of an evil spirit. Besides, the Indians say that a woman has not sufficient milk to nourish two babes at the same time, and from this point of view also twins are regarded as unlucky. The Indian woman, who has to work hard, is anxious not to bear more children than she is able to nourish and to take care of. In a Choroti family three or four

[1]) Cardús *op. cit.* p. 263.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

RELIGION.

CHAPTER XII.

Belief in gods and spirits in general.

I have mentioned before that the religion of the Chaco Indians is a subject strangely neglected by all who have travelled among these natives and studied their customs. Thus, in regard to the Tobas, the naturalist Azara arrived at the conclusion that they have no religion at all, and d'Orbigny rested satisfied with stating that »their religious beliefs are very limited», whereas the Catholic missionary Cardús considered the study of these things useless. Similarly, nothing — apart from the data published by myself — has been related of the religious ideas of the Choroti and Ashluslay. Almost the only author on the Chaco Indians who gives us some information about their religion is Barbrooke Grubb, but he deals exclusively with the ideas and customs of the Lenguas of Paraguay. 114

The main reason for this deficiency of our information respecting one of the most important sides of native culture is obvious. The subject of religion, if one has a real study of it in view, requires special training and a prolonged stay among the natives, and these conditions have been lacking in the case of most »ethnographic» travellers in the Chaco, not to speak of naturalists or ordinary travellers. But even to one who devotes special attention to the spiritual aspect of Indian culture the study of such a subject as religion is beset with great difficulties, and the study can hardly ever become exhaustive. Although this may undoubtedly be said of my own contribution also, I venture to believe that in the following account at any rate the most important religious ideas and customs of the Pilcomayo Indians are mentioned.

The lowest tribes of the Pilcomayo, the Choroti, Mataco, and — as far as I have been able to ascertain — the Ashluslay, have no belief in a supreme god, nor any ideas of a creation. Beliefs of this kind are extremely 776 ● 773

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rare in all South America, and in the Chaco they are found only among such an advanced tribe as the Tobas, and, in a certain sense, among the Lenguas. The latter Indians, according to Mr. Grubb, ascribe the creation of all things and of man to a being disguised as a beetle, but this being is without moral attributes and in fact is only of purely mythological interest. As to the Tobas, they believe in two high gods or Supreme Beings, who — just as is the case with the Creator-Beetle of the Lenguas — only figure in their mythology but play no rôle in their practical religion. Moreover, the ideas they entertain about these Supreme Beings are not consistent but seem to represent two different stages in the evolution of their religious thought. These beings are especially spoken of as the creators of the world and of mankind. According to the apparently older version, all things were made by a bad deity Kaloaraik, »The Evil One», who created the world as miserable and full of suffering as it actually is in the mind of the Tobas. Again, according to the younger version, the world owes its origin to a good deity Peritnalik, who created things good and useful and thenceforward took benevolent care of mankind.

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Since no kind of worship is paid to these Supreme Beings they have more interest from a mythological than from a religious point of view. I shall therefore deal with them again in a later chapter in connection with other myths of the Tobas.

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In practical religion spirits of a lower order play the main rôle. Of these spirits some are in their nature good, others again bad, but — as is usual among savage peoples — the latter impress the mind of the Indians more than the former and are therefore more conspicuous in their religion. The Choroti call these spirits *möhsek*, the Ashluslay *eitché*, the Mataco *aittah* or *nahút*, and the Tobas *peyák*. In examining the different applications of this belief in spirits, we find that to the primitive Indians it is obviously of great practical importance: it compensates them for the lack of a notion of natural laws. Stupendous phenomena of nature, events otherwise unaccountable to them, especially disease and death, are explained as their mysterious actions. There are spirits inhabiting inanimate objects of nature and heavenly bodies, there are spirits embodied in animals and plants, and lastly, there are spirits who are not particularly attached to things animate or inanimate but have an independent existence, hovering about in the forests or on the plains, or in the air, causing such phenomena as thunder and lightning, eclipses of the sun and the moon, drought, devastating hurricanes, etc. Worst of course are those demons who are regarded as the causes of disease and death, and

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in their magical dances and conjurations the Indians as a matter of fact most often deal with these particular evil spirits.

These are features common to the religious beliefs of all Indians of the Chaco; indeed they are found among all South American Indians. But even in the Chaco this general belief in spirits appears in somewhat different forms among different tribes. The *Choroti* fancy that the spirits, *möhsek*, in their external appearance have the shape of old, withered men (*kihïlahs*). They are, in the imagination of the Indians, provided with wings, which enable them to move rapidly through the air. Owing to their bird-like appearance the spirits are also called *ahuena* (»the birds«). They are countless in number, mostly invisible, and as a general rule evilly disposed towards mankind. I never met an Indian who professed to have *seen* a *möhsek*, but nearly all say that they have *heard* their voices at night. One peculiarity of the demons of the Chaco Indians is that they only exist at night. As soon as darkness sets in the Choroti Indian fears mysterious dangers from the *möhsek*, who are then believed to draw near the villages in great numbers and even to enter into the huts, visiting the inhabitants with sickness and death. This is the reason why a traveller living with the Choroti can hear from some house nearly every night the low chant of some old man accompanied by the dull sound of the rattle gourd, *pelïte*, with which he tries to conjure and keep off the supernatural pests. At daybreak however the spirits are supposed to leave for the forests and the plains — with a piping or whistling sound, the Indians explained to me, which they are very clever in imitating. For this purpose the Choroti use a special kind of round whistle which they generally wear hanging round the neck as an ornament. At their religious dances they produce, from time to time, shrill whistling sounds with these whistles, professedly with a view to conjuring the *möhsek*. The Indians believe that they can keep supernatural beings at bay by imitating them in their external appearance or their sounds.

In the Chaco many weird sounds are heard at night which are apt to fill the natives with superstitious fear. The Choroti frequently told me about the »nightly whistling of the spirits« (*yap möhsek ahnäh*). The peculiar piping or whistling which is most often identified with the sound of the spirits is, I believe, produced by certain insects living on the stems or branches of the trees. The spirit of the tusca tree was specially mentioned to me, but this spirit is said to be a »good« being.

The idea of the Choroti, that the spirits have the shape of old men, has given rise to a peculiar and cruel custom. They do not allow their

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throwing spells embodied in certain material objects, small stones, cactus thorns, bones, certain insects, etc. We should say that it is the stone, thorn, etc. that causes the pains felt by the victim, but its real cause is the mysterious demon embodied in the object. This appears most clearly from the conjuration with which the medicine-man tries to remove the evil and in which the demon is directly addressed.

An epidemic is likewise caused by evil spirits, but independently of the operation of a wizard. Among these spirits there are real death-demons, who in the imagination of the Indians wander about the village carrying off one Indian after the other. The Indians are aware that these diseases, among which are small-pox, malarial fever, dysentery, etc., are imported by the whites, and they consider that their own medicine--men are powerless against them.

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The animistic beliefs of the *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Choroti, but it is evident that the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia have been considerably influenced in their religion by the Tobas, as is the case in their general culture. The Mataco make a distinction between two kinds of lower spirits. The commonest kind of spirit, although not the most feared, are those whom the Indians call *aitták*, generally adding the attribute *slámsa* or *slahsa* which means »small». These are of exactly the same nature as the majority of the spirits whom the Choroti call *mõhsek*, although in external appearance they more resemble the *peyák* of the Tobas. Whereas in the imagination of the Choroti the *mõhsek* have the shape of old men, the *aitták* of the Mataco — and similarly the *peyák* of the Tobas — have the shape of young boys (*nátses*), but at the same time they are provided with wings, so that they can move as rapidly as the wind from one place to another. They are invisible, countless in number (*vúh*) and evilly-disposed (*tavakái*) towards mankind. *Vúh aittáh tavakái*, »there are numberless evil spirits», the Mataco are in the habit of saying when speaking of the world of demons. The ideas they entertain about them are the same as those of the Choroti. During the day these demons are not dangerous to men, for then they have retired far away to the plains and the forests. But as soon as night draws near they arrive in great numbers, although not in visible shape, dancing round the villages and huts which they like to visit with sickness and misfortune. The Indians try to keep them off by dancing, when they imitate the very movements which they fancy the demons make, by drumming, and by performing conjurations to cure patients already attacked by the demons.

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The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance, the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút teláh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyá*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamsa* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mataco for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

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776 in drought, in eclipses, etc. Thunder and lightning, for instance, are caused
821 by the demons called *aittáh tavakái pählai* (the »thunder demons»), which pass in great numbers through the air or above the clouds. Eclipses of the moon, on the other hand, are attributed to a demon called *aittáh hayáh* which is supposed to prey upon the moon. The Mataco try to frighten away both the thunder-demons and the demon eclipsing the moon by shouting loudly and making a noise, and by beating drums.

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775 The same may be said of the nature of the *aittáh* and the *nahút* as
774 has been said of the *möhsek* of the Choroti. It seems to me probable that they are in their origin nothing but spirits of the dead or disembodied human souls. From this point of view, I believe, Pelleschi is right when he says that the religion of the Mataco can be characterized as essentially a worship of souls. But there are disembodied souls of different kinds. The Mataco word for »soul» is *kasītah*. It is the soul that detaches itself from the body, temporarily during dreams, permanently in death. As a death-spirit the *kasītah* is generally the object of fear. Of these death-spirits some, which are particularly evil-minded, become *nahút* or personifications of mortal diseases, whereas others have become personifications of curable illnesses and lesser evils. It is a well known fact that the spirits of certain persons — especially of sorcerers and persons who have died a violent death — are greatly feared, and just such spirits are likely to
M turn into that particular kind of demon whom the Mataco call *nahút*. The
[764] fact that graves are regarded as the dwelling-places of these demons confirms the conclusion that the *nahút* are in their nature nothing but disembodied human souls.

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776 As to the *T o b a s*, I have already mentioned that they call the spirits *peyák*. Like the Mataco, the Tobas fancy that these spirits appear in the shape of small boys (*nätolik*), and in daily life, when speaking of these beings, they more often use the word *nätolik* than the word *peyák*. Although the spirits in the main have human form, they at the same time resemble birds, and more particularly ostriches. At any rate the Tobas informed me that »the *peyák* have wings, large like those of the ostrich» — an idea quite natural to a people who even identify living men with ostriches. Still they are mostly invisible to the human eye; only the medicine-men who are endowed with a special clear-sightedness can see them and enter into communication with them. The whole world swarms with these mysterious beings, who are regarded as the causes of all evils that befall man. Everything that has been stated on this

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Chapter XIII.

Belief in „good spirits".

776 I have so far mainly spoken of such spirits of the Chaco Indians as are regarded as essentially evilly disposed to mankind, being looked upon as the authors of sickness and misfortune. But the religion of these Indians is by no means only a pure demonology. They also assume the existence of »good spirits« and these from a certain point of view are of the greatest interest. The Chaco Indians especially speak of their good spirits with reference to the guardian spirits of the medicine-men and the spirits animating certain plants. With the former I shall deal presently. For the moment a few words may be said of the spirits which are believed to animate the *plants*. Of course, there are also evil or harmful plant spirits. The character of the spirit animating a tree or plant is naturally first of all determined according to the useful or harmful properties of that tree or plant. Thus plants producing poisonous fruits harmful to man, are animated by evil spirits, since the effects are always ascribed to the indwelling spirit, the »soul« of the plant. Likewise, in the cactus thorns, of which malignant sorcerers avail themselves in throwing spells, are animated by evil *möhsek*, *aittáh*, *peyák*, according to the names different tribes give these demons. Still the Chaco Indians pay special attention to the spirits of such trees or plants as produce edible or otherwise useful fruit, which in a country like Chaco are of essential importance to the inhabitants.

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776 824 262 Among trees which from an alimental point of view are of great importance to the Chaco Indians I have mentioned the algaroba, the chañar, and the tusca, the fruits of which ripen in the months October to February. It is particularly these trees which are said to be animated by »good spirits« who control their growth and cause their fruits to ripen.

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The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noín* or *nōtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aittáh slahsa is*, the Choroti *möhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aittáh* or *möhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nōtta* (= *noin'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noin*.

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273 mind a mysterious and sacred thing. To be intoxicated by the drink is
776 therefore equal to being internally filled with a spirit or spiritual power, and this »good spirit» will, they believe, protect the intoxicated person against supernatural evils of every kind. Thus the Tobas are wont to say of such a person that he has a *peyák nõtta nãppihe*, i.e. a good spirit or *peyák* in the brain (or more strictly speaking, in that special part of the brain which is nearest to the forehead), and other Chaco tribes have exctly the same idea. This is the true reason why the Indians celebrate every important and critical incident, birth and death, the puberty of girls, marriage, warfare, etc., among other things with excessive drinking of some fermented beer. The spirit is present in different liquors in different degrees according to the strength they possess. The best beer, in the opinion of all Indians, is the algaroba beer, because it is the strongest of all. Next to this, the Choroti and Mataco appreciate the beer brewed from the tusca and chañar most, whereas the Tobas prefer the beer made of *santia* or water-melon. From the fruit of the tusca and the chañar the Tobas only rarely brew intoxicating drinks. Similarly maize beer, which plays such an important part in the religious mysteries of the Avas and of many other South American peoples, is not unknown to the Chaco Indians, but is less appreciated than other kinds of beer, since maize is but little cultivated by them.

The idea that a spirit resides in the fermented drink — an idea which is encountered among many South American tribes[1]) — is of course connected with the belief that the very state of ecstasy or exaltation into which a man falls when intoxicated by such a drink is of mysterious or supernatural origin. But there are different kinds of religious ecstasy, and all of them are not inspired by good spirits but some by demons. The spirit of the drink naturally manifests its character in the effects it produces in the person intoxicated by it. The Mataco, who have been most in contact with the whites, say that in their own algaroba beer there is an *aittáh slahsa is* (a good spirit), in the brandy of the whites, on the other hand, an evil and destructive demon. Consequently, when the whites get drunk on their brandy and begin to fight, the Mataco say that they are inspired by demons, and at their great »carnival» — which in Bolivia is usually celebrated amidst orgies and fights — they say, many *aittáh tavakai* (evil spirits) are moving about. It is the same

[1]) See my *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis.* Humaniora. I: 4), the chapter »Berauschende und narkotische Getränke».

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with the Indian himself: when intoxicated by brandy he gets mad and is always ready for fights and outrages; on the other hand, his own native beers comparatively seldom have such bad effects. As a rule they render him happy and joyful, virile and courageous, and make him forget the troubles and hardships of life. This is the reason why, to the Indian mind, there is a *good* deity or spirit residing in the native algaroba beer. But since this deity in the first place inspires the Indian with *virile* qualities, the drinking of this as well as of most other intoxicating drinks is strictly limited to the men. Women never drink algaroba beer, except perhaps some very old women who are freed from the restrictions normally laid upon the weaker sex.

The great drinking-feasts of the Chaco Indians during the »season» will be described later on, as also the ceremonies with which the sacred drinks are prepared.

When the Chaco Indians speak of their »good spirits», however, they generally mean spirits of another kind. The medicine-men as a rule speak of these spirits in the singular, meaning thereby a mysterious personal guardian spirit of their own. Such a being is for instance the *peyák nõtta* of the *T o b a* medicine-man, a kind of individual guardian spirit with whom the Indian has entered into a special relation and whom he asks for assistance in sickness and in every necessity. Among the Tobas all professional medicine-men and many of the older men are said to have such guardian spirits; even some of the women, who then exercise the profession of female sorcerers. The more the person in question has acquired power over his or her »good spirit», the more that person is in possession of what we should call supernatural powers. When, for instance, the medicine-man has to cure a sick person, he summons his own guardian spirit and by his aid expels the disease-demon from the patient's body. Similarly, those sorcerers who practise black or nefarious magic are able to harm their fellows only by the aid of their assistant spirits whom they invoke and who will despatch a spirit against their victim.

If a sorcerer wishes to harm another sorcerer, who of course also has his guardian spirit, or some other person in possession of such a spirit, he can do so only by fighting and vanquishing the assistant spirit of that person. This was especially made clear to me by the *C h o r o t i* Indians. A sorcerer who wants to kill or harm such a person, I was told, invokes his own »good spirit»; this comes down from the heavens in the

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his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyím*, by his *peyák nŏtta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyím* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aittáh is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aittáh is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aittáh talák*, *i.e.* »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aittáh talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aittáh talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

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in the conjurations of the Toba medicine-men, as we shall presently find.

These conjurations are varied with other manipulations, above all with blowing, spitting, and rubbing the bad spot. Massage regularly forms part of the treatment applied by the Chaco medicine-men, and is the only action which may really have relieving effects. — Ultimately the doctor again leans over the patient and starts to suck vigorously the bad spot. He turns away, spits and hawks up and behaves as if he were going to vomit. Thereupon he takes something from his mouth and, turning to the bystanders, shows it to them: it is the arrow, consisting of a pebble, a piece of bone, etc. which he pretends to have extracted from the patient's body. The latter should now recover; but it may be that there are several of them in his body, or that a new arrow is sent into it which he will feel on the following night. Generally therefore the treatment must be continued for several evenings.

The Choroti medicine-men also invoke their guardian spirits (*mōhsek eis*), and if they succeed in extracting the arrow, this is said to be ultimately due to the assistance of their good spirits. The invocation of the »good spirit» in connection with the treatment of sickness is however a form of worship that I have studied much better among the Mataco and the Tobas.

The *M a t a c o* have exactly the same theory as to the nature of bodily disorders as the Choroti, ascribing curable »sickness» to possession by an *aittáh sláhsa* (a »little» *aittáh* or demon) and mortal epidemic disease to a *nahút*. The ultimate cause of sickness is witchcraft. To extract the »arrow» or splinter (*aláh*) discharged by the demon or his human controller is the ultimate aim of the medicine-man. But he cannot do it with his own powers, he needs the aid of his »good spirit», the *aittáh talák*. If the good spirit does not come down to his assistance, the patient is bound to die. The invocation of the good spirit, or the prayer, is therefore the last and decisive action of the medicine-man's treatment of the sick person.

Whereas the Choroti medicine-man does not generally use any magical instrument when he treats a patient, the particular instrument of the Mataco doctor is a sort of rattle, called *tahús*, consisting of a number of pieces of tin arranged round a circular piece of leather. When the instrument is shaken it produces a dull sound which is believed to inspire the spirits with fear. At certain other conjurations it is worn by the medicine-man like a cincture round the loins.

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assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets.

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Avúshe*, when the young men try to »hurry on» the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the »power» lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings.

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: »These spirits . . . fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the tolderias (villages) or round the toldos (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm».[1]) This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible.

[1]) Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.

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Čaʔačute was a man-like spirit. He liked to steal women. One day he kidnapped Carancho's wife. The vulture went to fetch her. The spirit had a young jaguar which watched the entrance to his hut and ate anyone who dared to come near. Carancho shot the jaguar and killed it, but *Čaʔačute* still had a big bird *axwéntax*[1] who ate men just as the jaguar did. *Čaʔačute* thought the bird would eat the Carancho, but the vulture killed it with the spurs on his feet.

There was also a monster (*kaxtéx*) with a big stomach and a tremendous mouth who swallowed everyone he met. Carancho went to dig some honey from a tree with an axe. *Kaxtéx* came and asked him for some honey but instead of giving him honey the Carancho sharpened a piece of *palo-santo* at both ends and threw it into the mouth of the monster. The stick went into his stomach and killed him.

The vulture also killed another monster (*kalačináx*) whose leg was a blade made of iron. He would kill anyone within his reach with a sweep of his leg which he used like a scythe.

E. SPIRITS

54. The Welán

The *welán* are like fire by night and when they go out they stir up the winds. Sometimes they appear as white men with mausers, carabines or Winchester guns. They are very fond of fresh meat and eat everything they find, cats, dogs and so on. Their strength is very great and they furnish strength to the men they enter. The persons possessed by a *welán* become furious and so strong that they can break a lasso. The *welán* very often steal children and carry them away under the earth. The man who is dealing with a *welán* knows all the roads and pools and is never lost.

[1] Big bird with a tuft of feathers on its head.

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He can be near the Pilcomayo[1] or in the bush without losing his way.

To meet a *welán* means death. Only the medicine-men are allowed to speak to them without danger. If a person is stolen by a *welán* he will become a medicine-man for he understands the ways and the language of the *welán*. The *welán* appear only at night. In order to ask them questions it is necessary to apply to a medicine-man who knows their language. The medicine-man enters a *yuchan* tree, the *welán* blows on him and the medicine-man in turn blows upon the people. By night the *welán* come to visit the medicine-men.

When a *welán* takes a person away that person can no longer speak and does not wish to remain at home any longer. He must be sung over for a month, at the end of which time he becomes a medicine-man.

55. Origin of Disease

A man was caught by a *welán* who made him a chief *welán*. The man who had become a *welán* changed his mother into one also. One day a man died and the people charged the *welán*-man with his death. They invited the *welán* to visit them under the pretence of presenting him with a sheep. The man accepted the invitation but before going he told his mother he would probably not return again. He went to the others who were glad to have him accept their invitation. They gave him a sheep, asking him to eat it immediately, but the *welán* refused and said that he would like to eat it upon reaching his home. So he went taking the animal with him. The men who had planned to kill him ran ahead and hid themselves on the path he was following. When they heard the bleating of the sheep they shot at him and the *welán*-man was mortally wounded. Feeling how deep the point of the arrow had penetrated he

[1] The big swamps formed by the Pilcomayo are real labyrinths in which one may become lost.

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told his murderers that they had killed him, but that he would revenge himself by killing them too. He took some of the blood which ran from his wound and threw it at them. The blood changed into disease and from that day on men have been killed by disease. Before that time disease did not exist. (XIII).

56. The Welán-Woman (Pedro)[1]

A woman was heard crying one night and when the men asked her what the trouble was she said that they had killed her son and that she was going to eat their sons. At midnight she left her house and caught and ate a child. She did this many times. When the parents of the children kept awake to protect them the *welán*-woman made herself invisible. Finally they could stand it no longer and decided to kill the woman. They killed her but because she was a *welán* she came to life again and went right on killing and eating children. The men realized she could not be killed permanently so they decided to look for another shelter. They hollowed out a *yuchan* and entered it but it was very hot and they were obliged to leave. They slept in the open and the woman ate many children. From there the *welán*-woman proceeded to another village, Pozo del Tigre, and started eating children there. The men of Pozo del Tigre proved more astute. They killed the *welán*-woman and then they started a big fire and burned her. When she was in the fire the embers cracked up and jumped in all directions. Those which fell in the forest changed into jaguars domestic cats, pumas, tapirs and snakes. Those which fell into the water became rayfish, *surubi*, *piranya*, *bagres*, *pacu* and other water animals.

57. The Spirits (Pedro)

The spirits, that haunt the imagination of the Matako, are called *hoʔnat-Lele* (dwellers of the ground) or *honatsi-Lele*

[1] This tale is the sequel of the preceding.

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(inhabitants of the night). In Pedro's pronunciation the word for ghost was *na-Lele*.

When a spirit enters a body the person must sing, otherwise the spirit will never leave his victim, he will make him feel hot and cold alternately. All medicine-men have experienced these changes and the white men call malaria the disease caused by the presence of a spirit in a person's body.

Near Las Lomitas there is a dog spirit. His hair is like the hair of a sheep, his eyes like those of an owl only very sunken. He is as tall as a calf. He sometimes comes by night to the bush near Las Lomitas and catches women whom he makes sick. It is difficult to see him because when he has no intention to do harm he runs away when people approach him, as do the *hoʔnat-Lele*.

There exists a species of spirits called *ihiǫL* which look like owls. One by the name of *Tapitax* invented pottery. Sometimes pots are found which belong to him. They are large and are buried in the earth up to the brim.

The *hoʔnat-Lele* are bad spirits. They have the appearance of men, only they are lean and dark. They live in *yuchan* trees and roam about during the summer months, in winter they go underground. They make their presence known by singing and whistling. They make mead from honey and *algarroba* husks. They pile together the fibers of the husks.

58. The Man among the Spirits (Pedro)

A man was caught by the *hoʔnat-Lele*. He remained with them for more than a year. When he returned he found himself in the middle of fields. He married a woman-spirit and lived the life of the spirits. Once he went with his wife to fetch honey out of a tree, which according to his wife, was full of it. It was midnight and as the man could not see, his wife pulled his eyelashes out and gave him hers so that he could see in the darkness. To dig out the honey the woman-spirit used an iron implement like a cutlass. She

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stuck it into the tree, which immediately opened and let the honey flow out. When the honey stopped flowing she removed the iron and the wood closed without leaving a scar. The *ho?nat-Lele* sleep during the day and work at night. They have their sexual intercourse during the day. The man could not get accustomed to the life they led because he was unable to sleep during the day. The houses of the spirits-of-the-earth are like long corridors.

59. The Man and the Woman Spirit (Pedro)

While walking in a forest one day a man met a woman who told him her husband was out hunting. She asked him to sleep with her. They slept together and the woman told the man that he must go as her husband would return soon, but that he must visit her again. The man left, but on his way he felt excited again and his penis became erect. He ran back to the woman's house and slept with her once more. When they were through she told him that he must hurry for her husband was now quite near. She promised to send him his son in two days. The man ran away as fast as he could but he heard a storm coming up and realized that it was the woman's husband chasing him. The man hid in a hole which he covered with *caraguatá* (Bromelia) leaves. The storm passed by without seeing him. The man set out again on his journey. Early in the morning of the following day the woman's son was delivered. At noon the child was grown up. His mother told him where his father lived and asked him to go there but to come back in four or five days. The child obeyed. When he got back to his mother he heard that his father had taken sick after his departure. No one had told him but he knew nevertheless. He returned to his father and cured him. When his father was well again they went to the forest to get some honey. Because he was the son of a man and a spirit the child always knew just where to find honey. The spirits hear the buzzing of the bees produced by their

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539 small spinning tops. They found plenty of honey. The
773 child then returned to his mother's house. The father became ill again and the medicine-man who attended him was very ignorant so the man died. The son heard of it and returned to his father's village to punish the people who let his father die. He started an epidemic of smallpox which killed everybody except his father's family. One man from the village took refuge in another village, but he died anyway, although the people who had received him were not harmed. The son did not kill all the Matako, he destroyed only the men who had not taken good care of his father. The woman, her husband and the child were spirits.

60. The Wood-spirit (Pedro)

539 *Ča?ačute*[1] is a bush-spirit in human form. *Ča?ačute's*
773 father was old and ill. The cause of his sickness was the dirty and worn condition of the jaguar skin on which he
776 slept. A new skin was needed to make him well again. *Ča?ačute* went to hunt a jaguar. He asked people he met on the road to show him the jaguar's tracks, which they did. When he arrived at the path followed by the jaguar he lay down as if he was dead. The jaguar came and thought he was really dead. He dragged him into the forest and nudged him to see if he would move, but *Ča?ačute* remained very still. The jaguar pulled the tongue of *Ča?ačute* out in order to determine whether or not he was dealing with a corpse, but he did not give any sign of life. Then *Ča?ačute* took up a club of *matako* wood, like those used by the Chulupi Indians, and struck the jaguar a terrible blow on the head, killing him. The jaguar was then skinned and *Ča?ačute* returned to his father and presented him with the skin. His father's health was immediately restored. As soon as the skin became dirty *Ča?ačute's* father was stricken with illness and not until the skin was replaced did he recover.

[1] About *Ča?ačute* see p. 41.

Ćaʔačute was a tall and stout man. He never got tired and could carry a jaguar on his shoulders with ease. He was valiant and would attack single handed the villages of his enemies. His method was as follows: He would walk to the center of the village and go straight to the chief's hut. He would then ask the chief for a whetstone. On this he would sharpen his spear and then kill the chief without harming the rest of the villagers.

Whenever an Indian married, *Ćaʔačute* would kidnap his wife. His house was full of stolen women. One day he took his brother's wife. The offended man went to *Ćaʔačute's* house to get her but *Ćaʔačute* would not give her up. The brother left and *Ćaʔaćute* followed him as he was going to kill him. The brother hid himself in the bush beside the trail and as *Ćaʔačute* passed he shot an arrow into his armpit. *Ćaʔačute* died and all the men, thoroughly pleased, went to get the women *Ćaʔačute* had stolen.

61. Ḳatáu, the Spirit of Smallpox

Two parties of young men went in different directions in search of honey for mead (Spanish *jalapa*). The first party went so far from the village that they were obliged to camp in the forest. They suddenly heard roars of a man who was a good two miles away. After a short time they again heard the roars and groans. They were repeated over and over again. The men realized it was *Ḳatáu*. He is an *āhat*, a spirit, tall and stout who can go through the jungle as quickly as if he were following a beaten path. He has a roar like a bull. As soon as the men heard the roar they put their fire out. *Ḳatáu* sensed the presence of someone so he passed very silently. When he was far from the camp of the men he roared. The men heard his roars again and again until they gradually became lost in the night. Upon returning to the village they learned that the other party had also heard the roars of *Ḳatáu*. The men made mead (an intoxicant) from honey and they sang and danced very

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NOTES

I. The Spirits of the Dead

114 1) *Husek* (*o-husek* or *no-husek* = my soul) is the »god» we have inside of us when we are living. This spirit goes away when we dream. It does not reside in any particular organ but is everywhere in our body. It is through the *husek* 115 that we know what is going to happen. When we die the *husek* becomes an *āhat*, when the *āhat* dies it becomes a 825 bird called *xwitson*. The *xwitson* becomes an *katak* fly and the fly a *ḳipḳip* bird, the *ḳipḳip* becomes a spider (*xwistę́*) and the *xwistę́* becomes a bat (*asus*) and then disappears.

116 2) The love spirit is called *soitayax*. She is beautiful, all 831 adorned with necklaces and bracelets, exactly like a woman 837 falling in love. She is very fond of men and it is she who commands women to love. When a woman leaves her husband and goes to another man, it is because her soul has tired of the first husband. In the same way a man takes another wife, his soul craves a change.

115 3) Now and then the *āhat* comes back shortly after death. In such cases, he is very bad. His eyes are yellow. If an *āhat* comes back he goes directly to the house where women are alone, generally the women become frightened and run away. The *āhat* like to sleep with women. They tell them that they are going to bathe and that they will come back very clean and good-looking.[1]

4) At times the spirit comes back to visit his grave, but this only occurs a few days after death, before he has had time to go to his family house in the underworld.

5) The soul goes to the abode of the dead riding a beautiful horse, well-saddled and carrying all that is necessary for the trip. The soul also drives in a car, from one village to another and wanders everywhere. On his way to the land

[1] It is said that the *āhat* are dirty, but my informant was not of that opinion. He told me that all the *āhat* he had seen were clean and beautiful.

To pass through this darkness the medicine-man changes into a species of owl (*sinalčǫ́*). This is a bird who travels by night and whose eyes are like lanterns. In this disguise he is able to fly in the dark. After crossing the dark area he changes himself into a (white aquatic bird with red-circled eyes. When he arrives at the Big Fire's house he changes himself into a *carancho* and in this last disguise he calls on the Big Fire. They get acquainted and are very friendly. Later the *carancho* changes himself into a beautiful and well dressed woman. Big Fire is on good terms with the beautiful woman. Soon she becomes a man again. Big Fire asks the medicine-man if there is much bush in his country. The medicine-man takes care not to mention straw, bushes or trees, otherwise Big Fire will eat them up. The medicine-man goes home.

III. The Medicine-men

A man who wants to become a medicine-man must eat raw dog flesh. Ordinarily the candidate slays a young pup eats its flesh, and buries its head and skin very carefully.

Medicine dances are taught the prospective medicine-men by demons or spirits who give them their power. The *welán* are the spirits who are the most inclined to instruct men in the art of magic. The ordinary method in this procedure is as follows: The soul of a man is ravished by a *welán* and shut into a tree. There the man's soul remains captive and the *welán* teaches it the language of the spirit, then the *welán* blows on the prospective medicine-man and he thus acquires the power to treat sick people who come to him, using the same method. Medicine-men are constantly in touch with the spirits. They meet them at night and talk with them. The spirits have a stick called *laḳaaLoi* which contains their souls and this they give to their friends, the medicine-men.

Some women may acquire medical knowledge, but the Indians never consider them as smart as male doctors.

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XIII. The Diseases

753 The diseases are demons which have the appearence of
776 men but are invisible. They wear feathers like medicine-
men. Smallpox for instance is especially ugly. His head
755 is swollen and full of small holes. He lives not for from
Salta, in a cave on a big mountain. The demons of disease
live under the ground or within the *yuchanes*. They leave
their shelter to enter men and make them sick. In order
to get them out of the bodies of sick people one must ask
them what they want, for the demons always want some-
thing. One has to say, »What do you want?» The demon
answers, »Food, dresses, a gun.» All these things are to be
given him. But they are equally satisfied with only the
sight of these things and men may very well eat the food or
make use of the things whose essence the demons have
received. It would be very dangerous to eat of a dish before
the demon has helped himself. Men dance in order to scare
a demon or chase him away. The demon is obliged to parti-
cipate in the dancing and gets tired. When those who take
part in a treatment have danced for a while, the magician
speaks to the disease. The disease asks whether they are
angry with him. The medicine-man answers, »No, we are
dancing as usual.» The disease then says, »Then let us not
dance any longer, for I am to dance to-morrow too.»

753 Each thing has its *husék* (spirit) or image and it is this
774 image which the disease requires after he has stolen or
entered the soul of the man and it is this soul which the
medicine-man has gone to get. During the first part of all
medical ceremonies, the medicine-man's spirit goes to the
disease and asks him which things he wants in return for
the sick man's soul.

[124] One of the reasons why the Matako always require payment
to let themselves be photographed is that by photographing
them one takes their image (spirit) and thus may hurt them.
The money they get for the photograph may eventually

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on the sick woman. Then, as she seemed to have quited down, they started smoking and talking together. The possessed woman even accepted a cigarette.

Observations made by natives during the performance: The adornments are worn by the patient on behalf of the spirit who is fond of the colors. The songs and the noise of the bells are also intended to please the spirit who, charmed by the ornaments and the noise, gets quieter and leaves the patient.

During this treatment another group of about eight Indians were participating in a similar ceremony. They were dancing around a kind of improvised altar which consisted of a stick surrounded by four smaller ones forming a cross. The central stick was topped by palm leaves, the ends of which were wrapped in paper strips painted red. The four other sticks bore palm leaves painted red with the ends cut off. These sticks were inserted into wooden stands painted alternately red and black and connected in pairs by transverse rods. The whole structure was resting on some rags. A rolled poncho belonging to the medicine-man had been laid near the central stick. The ground for the ceremony had been carefully swept. According to my informant the central stick contained the injurious element which had caused the disease. That stick was supposed to be loaded with bad influences and I was warned not to touch it.

The dancers wore different costumes. Two of them had belts of ostrich feathers, and feather wreaths on their heads. In addition they wore bells and rattles on their breasts, around their loins and their ankles. Around their necks they wore necklaces of sea shells and in one hand they held a bunch of ostrich feathers. The other dancers wore their ordinary clothes with the exception of their headbands and the bells and feathers they wore on their ankles.

When I arrived they were dancing in a circle around the altar, from right to left, looking straight ahead. Their dance step might be defined as a jerky jog-trot. They accompanied

726 which was dry at the time. Then, moving along the left bank, they came upon the people of San Martín from the rear, cutting off their retreat. A large number of the latter, mostly women and children [727] were killed or wounded. The Yuto people carried off a child with them as a prisoner.

Divers Religious Beliefs

● 776 158 Among the spirits the most to be feared are the wilan who possess their victims and sink them into a state of furious madness. Thus, in the San Patricio mission a young girl all at once became pale, her eyes starting from their sockets. She fled, bolting into the wooded area, where she remained for four days. Those who followed her said that her tracks disappeared as suddenly as if the girl had flown through the air.

Another girl got up from a fainting spell during which she had been under the care of four witch doctors and said that a spirit had entered her.

Here is a case which took place in San Andrés a short time before my arrival. A Mataco had gone off to some distance from the village in search of a horse. On the way back he imagined that he saw against [15] a tree, a small luminous being, about the size of a cooking pot, which leaped from tree to tree and finally disappeared in the underbrush. Frightened, our Indian fled to the village where he fell in a faint and was shaken by violent convulsions. Doctor C. Smith had to give him a morphine injection to quiet him. The Indian got better and a few days later felt well enough to go out into the surrounding area. On the way back he had the same experience and suffered like aberrations. His parents, shaking with fright, went to get the doctor so that he might give him an injection. According to Dr. C. Smith, such hallucinations may be the result of kidney trouble, which causes the diseased person to have optical illusions, especially the apparition of luminous spots before the eyes. Certain strange and sinister sounds, also, which the Mataco Indians attribute to spirits [821] are really made by nocturnal birds. And a meteor, which fell into the Pilcomayo during my stay there was explained to me by the Matacos as the fall of an old man with gray hair.

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [824] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a supernatural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made [278] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes [824] add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranas" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

/214 cont./

755 went to rest, smoking and talking with the assistants, but the medicine men did not stop singing and shaking their rattles, the sick man continuing to remain motionless. The dancing was [533] resumed after a quarter of an hour, accompanied this time by the [535] rattles and singing of all the officiants and by the sick person's bells. The participants had a fairly joyful air. The ceremony ended everyone sat down and began to smoke. Then they carried away the sticks and began to take off the ornaments, first those of the medicine men, then those of the assistants and dancers, and lastly those of the sick man, who went quietly to his hut.

Note

[774] naLi'le is a spirit who lives underground and steals the [776] images of men. Sometimes those whom it has taken thus become medicine men.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness
for the Benefit of One Person

755
554

(March 20-24, 1933)

A woman who was seriously ill and very rich was treated by five great medicine men of the region.

[349] In the area around the house where she lived, about five square meters of ground were cleared, wooden posts were erected there, and a kind of tent was erected; one of the posts, of about six meters, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentinian flag. Around the tent were placed the objects demanded by the illness or appropriate to please it: a spread-out mosquito net, a poncho on a weaving loom, an old suitcase, some cloths of loud colors, a saddle, a military coat,

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./

771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
167 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
177 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
131 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They
197 occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
177 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 171 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

At midnight also they sometimes break their sleep and men [200] and women together form into a circle and jump and shout in order to win the favor of heaven.

During lunar and solar eclipses they gather together to implore the cessation of the inexplicable phenomenon. Here, however, they have dealings with an a'hŏt whom they summon and fear.

These are the only acts of worship of which I have knowledge, and they show the inclination of these savages toward sabianism or the religion of stars; yet the sun does not play a part amongst the objects of their worship or of their summoning. According to Faustino the interpreter, they only get together to conjure up the sun's reappearance when it has been hidden behind clouds for a long time (an extremely rare occurrence in that region) or if a storm is coming up -- and even then it is not the sun but the a'hŏt itself which they conjure because they are being deprived of the light and warmth of the beneficial star.

One can therefore perceive that among these Indians also it is the women who start the worship process and who, as was the case amongst the ancient pagan nations, have found in the pale moon the element most suited to their condition and therefore more able and better disposed to protect them. The sun, on the other hand, so dissimilar from the temperament of womankind, seems to await the worship of men, but they are not so prone to be influenced by fears, hopes and prayers as are the women.

I have not seen idols in any of the places to which my curiosity has guided me to search for them, and my guides have always denied their existence. The Indians' outlook however does not seem to be one which would find the acceptance of idols difficult. In addition to that semi-worship of the heavenly bodies which has been alluded to it is probable that every object in nature having particular characteristics, be they terrifying or beneficial or mysterious, calls forth some response from the Indian which may be close to adoration.

MA 778

Mr. Braly, an engineer who has traveled in that part of the Chaco in the vicinity of the Salado River, assures me that the Mocovi Indians of those parts will not leave the place where the Aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with A terrible noise and blinding flash of light.

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

M 727 562

»before the Indians parted with their trophy they demanded that their old women should be allowed to sing and dance with it». It is a pity that Nordenskiöld, dominated by his exclusive interest to obtain a rare Indian »curiosity», did not avail himself of the excellent opportunity to inquire as to the ideas which the Indians connected with this scalp-dance of the women. We must look for an explanation from other sources. In the account I have given of the war customs of the Jibaros I have shown that they are wholly founded on magical ideas. The hair and head of the slain enemy is regarded as the seat of his soul or spirit and therefore is full of mysterious power. In fact, through the dances and other ceremonies performed with the scalp or head, the trophy is turned into a fetish which will promote the luck of the victor in various respects. The fact that the women play the most important rôle at the scalp-feasts — which seems to be almost a general rule — is also due to special magical ideas. The most important of the beneficial effects ascribed to the trophy is that it promotes fertility and renders the domestic animals prolific. Since, according to the belief of uncivilized peoples, woman is, as it were, the symbol of fertility, not only in the human world, but also in the animal world and in nature, it is reasonable to assume that women perform the scalp-dance precisely to promote fertility by means of the lucky object. Such is the case for instance among the Jibaros, where the dance of »supplication» round the trophy is professedly resorted to with a view to making the harvest abundant and the domestic animals prolific. Evidently the Chaco Indians entertain similar ideas. Since the head or the scalp is full of spiritual power we can also easily understand that the Indians believe themselves to be »inspired with courage» by drinking from the trophy.

M [778]

T 622 554 727

Special honour is paid among the Tobas to chiefs who have carried a war to a successful end. The ordinary chiefs receive confirmation in their dignity by the Council of the Old Men, and the young temporary leader, elected for that particular war expedition, is made an ordinary chief in recognition of his merits.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

on the sick woman. Then, as she seemed to have quited down, they started smoking and talking together. The possessed woman even accepted a cigarette. 755

Observations made by natives during the performance: The adornments are worn by the patient on behalf of the spirit who is fond of the colors. The songs and the noise of the bells are also intended to please the spirit who, charmed by the ornaments and the noise, gets quieter and leaves the patient. 755 776

During this treatment another group of about eight Indians were participating in a similar ceremony. They were dancing around a kind of improvised altar which consisted of a stick surrounded by four smaller ones forming a cross. The central stick was topped by palm leaves, the ends of which were wrapped in paper strips painted red. The four other sticks bore palm leaves painted red with the ends cut off. These sticks were inserted into wooden stands painted alternately red and black and connected in pairs by transverse rods. The whole structure was resting on some rags. A rolled poncho belonging to the medicine-man had been laid near the central stick. The ground for the ceremony had been carefully swept. According to my informant the central stick contained the injurious element which had caused the disease. That stick was supposed to be loaded with bad influences and I was warned not to touch it. 755 778

The dancers wore different costumes. Two of them had belts of ostrich feathers, and feather wreaths on their heads. In addition they wore bells and rattles on their breasts, around their loins and their ankles. Around their necks they wore necklaces of sea shells and in one hand they held a bunch of ostrich feathers. The other dancers wore their ordinary clothes with the exception of their headbands and the bells and feathers they wore on their ankles. 755 535 301

When I arrived they were dancing in a circle around the altar, from right to left, looking straight ahead. Their dance step might be defined as a jerky jog-trot. They accompanied 755 535

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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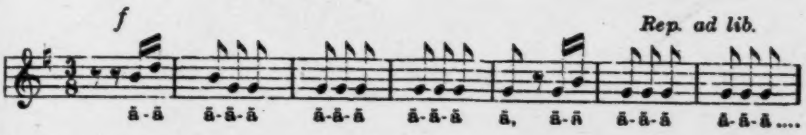

It is evident that the intention of the sorcerer was to drive away the evil demon into the forest in the direction in which he moved during the dance. With the same intention he threw the pebbles and spat in that direction. Again, the object of the embers placed on the path, as the Indians explained to me, was to burn the demon after it had been forced to leave the horse. — 755

The invocation of the »good spirit», an act called *ihanéh* by the Mataco, generally immediately follows the conjuration proper, but may also take place without a preceeding conjuration. It is an important act, since on the intervention of the good spirit the success of the whole treatment depends, but externally it does not differ much from a conjuration. At the »prayer», however, the rattle is never used. In all cases which came under my notice the chant or invocation of the good spirit was a chant without words. Evidently the medicine-man thinks that the tone of his voice alone is enough to move the compassion of the guardian spirit. 755 782

Thus, in one invocation of the good spirit which I witnessed the doctor again and again repeated the following refrains:

Am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum, am, gaum, gaum,
uh! am gaum, gaum, uh! aum, gaum, gaum, etc.

in another again he incessantly repeated:

ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho,
ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, ó-ho, etc., etc.

Lastly follows the usual extraction of the »arrow» or splinter, if the medicine-man has been successful in his invocation of the good spirit and the latter has come down to his assistance. Generally the doctor draws out the evil by sucking. He spits out the splinter on the ground, thereupon shows it to the bystanders, and declares that it is the thing that has caused the evil. The procedure is thus exactly the same as among the Choroti. 755

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

Chapter XVII.

Magical ornaments and amulets.

In my *Civilization of the South American Indians* I have shown that most Indian ornaments have originally had a purely magical significance, although among tribes affected by European culture they have gradually lost this significance and become real »decorations». Among the Chaco Indians also this course of development is conspicuous, for instance with regard to tattooing, body-painting, and the majority of other personal ornaments. The principles of *tattooing*, as it is practised by the Choroti, Mataco, and Tobas, have been set forth by me in a previous chapter.[1]) Tattooing is first of all closely related to scarification and bleeding, customs quite commonly practised by the Indians in all parts of South America. Blood-letting is in itself regarded as a method of purifying the human organism from evil and impure spirits. The spirits are supposed to enter the system, and especially to mix in the blood, thus giving rise to ailments of different kinds and to a state of weakness in the particular part of the body to which they have attached themselves. The Indian thinks that by bleeding that part he will rid himself of the dangerous intruder, just as he sometimes thinks it will leave his body with the mere perspiration, and this belief is naturally supported by the fact that in certain cases such purgations may really give some relief. The Chaco Indians are quite familiar with this idea. Thus among the *Choroti* it is a common thing for the men to bleed themselves with a sharp bone obtained from a certain »magical» animal or a splinter of a certain wood before certain important undertakings. Thus they say that, by drawing blood from the arm, the limb will get more strength for pulling the bow; the practice is therefore especially

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C 783 827 224

[1]) See *supra*, pp. 89 sq.

[p. 179]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 783 827 [224] resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arms fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the idea of the Choroti, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood; and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The same custom is practised by other tribes of the Pilcomayo. Thus C 171 Nordenskiöld noticed it among the Ashluslay, although he did not understand its real meaning. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition, he says, the Indians may be seen to pierce their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes. In both cases the idea evidently is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body and perhaps killed with the pointed instrument.

M 304 783 The scars left by the cuts are tended with care and shown with satisfaction, indeed with pride. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which the *palometa* fishes had inflicted on their body with their sharp teeth when they were bathing in the river. It is clear that according to the idea of the Indians not only the bleeding purges the body from impure matter and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous in regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with European civilization, M 751 783 304 namely, vaccination. I could myself appreciate the extraordinary importance ascribed to scars when during my stay at Esperanza I vaccinated a number of Chaco Indians who were employed as labourers at the sugar factory. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this one, and they therefore as a rule submitted to the vaccine inoculation without remonstration, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remained were regarded with wonder and admiration, and it was perfectly understood that they were a sort of warranty that the terrible disease would not attack the person wearing them.

M 302 189 Of all personal ornaments *body-painting* is the most important. All Chaco tribes practise it, and men and women alike. In the Chaco, as in other parts of South America, body-painting is essentially a custom of magical significance, as one can easily find out by considering the circumstances under which it is practised. The favourite colour of the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

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chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a sign of sorrow, but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *náhsah* (= *eis sáhe*), *i. e.* »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M 764 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algarobã beer is most appreciated, but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly, the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

relatives of the departed cannot live safely in it. This is the reason why in the Gran Chaco a traveller so often encounters remains of Indian villages which have evidently been burnt and abandoned by their inhabitants. The radical destruction of the whole village is always resorted to when several deaths have taken place at short intervals. The relatives of the deceased, when they abandon their own village, generally go and live with their relatives and friends in a neighbouring village, where they stay for some time, or until they decide to found a new settlement in some other part of the country. Custom requires that when the mourners arrive at the other village, they shall be received with wailing.

The Tobas, although they always burn the house where a death has taken place, do not as a rule deem it necessary to destroy the whole village. Similarly the relatives of the deceased generally remain there, building themselves a new dwelling; in other cases they leave the place for some time. The other inhabitants of the village, on the other hand, make no notable change in their mode of life, since they are not to the same extent exposed to danger from the death-spirit as the nearest relations.

Weeping and wailing plays an important part among the mourning ceremonies of the Indians, although it is always limited to the women and the children. The fact that wailing is ceremonial clearly appears from the circumstances under which it takes place. Although it is beyond doubt that the Indians are capable of real feelings of sorrow at the death of a near relation, yet their intense fear of death — including the fear of the dead body — is apparent throughout their mourning customs. The objects of the wailing seems to be partly to propitiate the spirit of the departed relative by showing him how deeply the survivors grieve at his death, partly to frighten away the death-demon by the noise. The latter point of view is probably the most important. Wailing is continued for several months after the death. The length of the wailing period varies according to the social importance of the deceased. A great chief is mourned in all tribes for longer than an ordinary member of the community, in some cases up to a whole year. As to the manner of wailing there is a marked distinction between the Tobas and the Mataco on the one hand, and the Choroti on the other. The wailing of the Toba women is like a greatly exaggerated loud crying and sobbing which is seemingly the expression of a desperate sorrow. The wailing of the Choroti women is calmer and more like the weeping of a child. Every lamentation consists of a series of sounds produced in a high falsetto voice and

/211/

755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked [292] over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war [237] shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. [302] The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/212 cont./

755 The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical
756 to the one the medicine men make heard during the treatment
783 of illnesses. The singing was given rhythm by the rattling of
786 the maracas, and, from time to time, by the sound of the bands of rattles and hoofs and blasts of the whistles. Each whistle blast marks a new stage in the performances connected with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine man, as well as his arrival or departure from a given place). The maraca was sometimes held in a threatening manner as if to repulse an invisible being; the same gesture was made by those who held ostrich feathers. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, one or another of the officiants took the ha'tax powder. One of the officiants ran behind and in front of his colleagues, dusting them from head to toe with a feather in his hand; he was assisted by another man, who made the rattles and little bells on their backs jingle. After having taken some ha'tax the officiants began to sing again, to brandish their maracas, and to make threatening gestures with them or with the feathers. Some medicine men were singing the song appropriate for their spirits, without concerning themselves with the recitative chants of their confreres.

The direct offensive against the illness followed these preliminaries: some individuals stopped out of the row, brandishing their maracas and feathers violently, and then returned to their places. Another began to throw up some dirt with his foot and was immediately followed by another who, seizing handfuls of dust, threw it in front of himself. Then one of them unsheathed his liana-cutter and began to cut the grass around him; his example was followed by almost the entire group, which threw itself into the assault on the illness. Some obstinately set upon one spot, as if they had at last driven the enemy into a corner, and beat it with redoubled blows of their liana-cutters or feather brooms, and then stamped on it as though they were burying their victim. The attack on the illness lasted rather long and was executed with great seriousness.

/212 cont./

755 756 783 796 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164] [231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Matacc

Choroti SK6

CHAPTER XVI.

Ceremonial fasting.

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785 Fasting or restrictions in diet play an important part among the religious practices of the Chaco Indians. In most cases ceremonial
262 fasting seems to be due to the belief that in eating man may come in contact with dangerous disease-bringing spirits which are in some way associated with the food. Since harmful spirits are supposed to have a special liking for certain kinds of food, these kinds of food are in some cases taboo to the Indians. The common belief that the spirits of the dead reincarnate themselves in various animals has in the first place given rise to all sorts of food restrictions, for the meat of such animals is generally, although not invariably, regarded as taboo.

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262 The Indians of the Gran Chaco, dependent upon very restricted sources of subsistence, as a rule utilize everything that can possibly be used as food. Thus several animals are eaten which we do not regard as fit for food, and if a certain animal is despised, this is, as a rule due to superstitious ideas of one kind or another. The *Choroti* for instance
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262 among other things regard such animals as locusts, certain beetles, lizards, and a kind of rat as delicacies; of others the fox is considered edible, as also of birds the owl and a certain kind of vulture (called *carancho* in Spanish, *Polyborus vulgaris*). In regard to the fox, the owl,
[888] and the vulture, however, there is the restriction that only *old* people can eat them, not young people and children, whom such food would do harm. In several cases I received from the younger Choroti men the explanation: »The old ones can eat the meat of this or that animal, not we». This means that such animals or birds as those just mentioned are in some way associated with evil spirits; the eating of the meat of these animals therefore would have disastrous consequences for young people and children who have less power of resistance against evil

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spirits, but not for old men who are initiated in the magic art and know how to render them harmless. — It is curious that on the other hand an animal like the *deer* is regarded by the Choroti as absolutely unfit for food. Not even old men would touch the flesh of deer, believing that if they did, they would die. This is due to the belief, mentioned before, that the deer is an evil spirit (*möhsek*), the reincarnation of the spirit of a sorcerer, a superstition which is widespread among the South American Indians and everywhere manifests itself in an aversion to eating the meat of this innocent animal.

M 785

Ceremonial fasting, as we have seen, is prescribed among the Choroti and the Mataco on certain occasions which are regarded as important and critical in some respect. Thus the father has to restrict his diet when he is lying in couvade, and girls have to diet during their first menstruation. We have also seen that behind these practices there is the fear of evil spirits in one form or another.

If disease and death bringing demons are believed to enter easily into the body with the food eaten, we can understand why eating is so often to the Indians a ceremonial business. This is also intelligible from the point of view that by eating an animal and coming in contact with its soul, a man may acquire the spiritual qualities of that animal. This idea explains the curious custom practised among the Tobas, that when a chief's daughter attains puberty, the men alone have to eat the meat of the ostrich, whereas the women eat the meat of the armadillo. As a general rule, both among the Tobas and among other Chaco Indians, men and women do not eat together but separately, the men first and the women afterwards. This custom is observed so strictly, that one may assume a particular superstition behind it. Moreover, when the Indians eat, they do not speak much with one another and do not like to be spoken to. Since they believe that man may evade evil spirits by keeping silence and avoiding attracting their attention, it is possible that the ceremonial character of their banquets is partly connected with this idea. And as women are especially believed to attract the spirits, this may be, or may originally have been, one reason why the men avoid eating with them. But it should also be remembered that in primitive societes eating together is believed to establish a mysterious union or connection between all those taking part in the common banquet. Since a strict distinction is made between a man's and a woman's spiritual qualities, it is not difficult to understand that the men avoid the company of the women on those occasions when they eat. However

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433 222 241 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 578 682 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar, and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 513 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things. They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 515 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 585 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 152 837 593 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless, the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 301 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

The moon is a great thief. He always steals something, cows in particular. Once the men got angry and wanted to kill him. The sun said, »I don't wish you to kill my friend but if you do I will go away.» The men were afraid and they let the moon eat the cows.

The moon had sexual intercourse with a woman. That is why women menstruate. From the intercourse of the moon with that woman a boy and girl were born. They were the first people.

If a woman dreams about an old man she will find that she is menstruating when she wakens. Her soul has had intercourse with the moon who is very old and looks like an old man. Each month when a woman is about to menstruate, she dreams about that old man.

9. Sun and Moon (Pedro)

The sun and the moon are friends. The sun helps and protects the moon. If anybody wants to kill the moon, the sun says, »He is my friend, I will kill you.» The sun went off to catch lice. He found white lice and gave some of them to the moon. The moon was not satisfied with these lice and said. »I am an expert in catching lice.» He went off, but he did'nt return. The sun said, »What is the matter with the moon?» He went to look for him. He found the moon very ill. One of the lice the moon had caught had bored a big hole in his head. The sun brought a comb, dressed his hair and the moon was well again. (VIII, p. 97).[1]

10. Why the Moon is Yellow (Pedro)

The sun wanted spears. He dived into a river and changed himself into a big yellow fish (*atsa*).[2] When the Indians saw this fish they tried to kill him with spears. The back of the

[1] Roman figures refer to the notes beginning on on p. 90.

[2] A *dorado* fish.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house.

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region.

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death.

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire.

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms.

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see.

156 The medicine-men who have snuffed the powder of *sebil* seeds (*natax*) and gone into a trance, see everything, especially the disease demons. They also see bad medicine-men. When in this state they may also call on the spirits of the dead (*āhat*). Such visits to the dead may sometimes help to cure a patient, for if it is the spirit of a dead person who caused the sickness, he can also take it away. A medicine-man has to pay the disease demon when he cures somebody and so he in turn charges the patient. The fees of a medicine-man are extremely high. My informant Pedro, for instance, has paid a poncho (value of 18 pesos) for being cured of snake bite. If the patient dies, the medicine-man is not entitled to a fee, even a very small one. However, his professional fame is not lessened.

If a medicine-man has not succeeded in effecting a cure, another one is called in, but then the task is more difficult as the disease has lost its temper. It is also important to call the right specialist. Certain doctors have acquired fame for curing particular diseases. Snake bites are usually treated by special medicine-men.

756 When medicine-men perform magical rites, a very big
●787 tree covered with green leaves, similar to those of a palm
761 tree and also extremely thick, appears before them. This tree always emits a noise which only medicine-men perceive. If this same tree appears to the medicine-men without leaves and quite dry, it presages death for him. He then knows that he has only one year to live. Through magic the medicine-man knows when his last moment is near. He has only to let the tree come. When his time arrives the magic tree comes down from the sky, stops at a certain height above the ground near the medicine-man, who throws himself on the ground, and as soon as he has breathed his last the tree gets up and bursts »like a bomb«. It is the end for the medicine-man and the tree. The soul of the dead [775] medicine-man goes to the sky to the place where the tree had been.

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cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

IX. Storms

821 When a storm approaches with rain and thunder, little children's ears are to be covered each time the thunder crashes, 761 otherwise Rain would take them under his arm and carry them away to his house. When such a thing happens, the child's body, which has remained on earth, becomes lean and white and all the food he takes is of no use. He visibly pines away, and it is not likely that a medicine-man can cure him. He will finally die without the cause of his death being known. The rain cannot do anything to grown-ups or big children, for it has not the strength to carry them away, [841] but it can harm menstruating women who happen to be out during a storm. Then they get very feeble.

X. Shooting Stars

821 Shooting stars foretell the death of someone. Meteors are 781 stones thrown by the rain in order to fell the *quebracho*.

XI. Treatment of Snake Bites

752 When a serpent bites a man, it goes into the wound and 825 climbs up in his body. When a man's foot is bitten by a-snake the leg must be pressed starting from the thigh, squeezing down to the place where he has been bitten. In so doing, the snake which has already had time to enter the leg, is obliged to go down into the big toe where it rolls itself up, tired. The operation lasts from evening to dawn and when the sun appears the snake gets cramped and vanishes under the ground. Once the snake is out the medicine-man has to suck the wound, for the departing snake has left its skin inside the body of the victim. The patient is completely cured only when the last piece of skin left by the snake has been removed. Otherwise he remains sick, has a headache and gets thinner and thinner.

If the progress of the snake inside the body cannot be stopped, the animal may go up into the head and blind the victim. It also goes to the heart and after repeated bites

3 Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

may kill him. The snake's *āhat* is called *punsoya* (perhaps Spanish-ponzoña : poison).

When a man is bitten by a snake he must kill the reptile and take it home in order to be cured rapidly. If he has been bitten while away from his home, he must dig a groove and put the snake into it, facing it in the opposite direction to that which he is taking. Thus the snake cannot enter him.

Tawkxwax taught the men the procedure to be followed in order to cure snake bites.

XII. How to Become a Singer

Those who want to become good singers must go to the bush and stay there for quite a long time. They must kill birds who are good singers and eat them after they have been made into powder and mixed with blood extracted from the arm. When they are in the bush they must first beat a drum, then run. Thus they will perhaps dream about a singing bird. When they wake up they must then take their drums and sing the song they heard in their dreams. One must not awaken until the song is finished or he will not remember it. Everyone has two songs and he must sing them every day in order to learn them. Ordinarily several young men go to the bush and after they have dreamed of a song they sing one after another. Generally three or four days are sufficient to master a song.

One must not sing someone else's song. If after one has eaten a bird he dreams of an iguana, it is no longer worth while to go on, for he will never become a good singer. The birds one dreams about and who teach one how to sing are not ordinary birds, they are *paata* (supernatural beings). The women do not know how to sing but they can cry when they have to mourn. Not all women know how to weep. In order to weep well, a woman must dream about another woman who is a good mourner. There are some exceptional women who can sing.

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angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs. 768

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family. 756 768

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon. 765 [302 364]

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning. 775 768

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment 787 ● [828]

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *āxǫ̀lĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

Funeral Rites

763 If the eyes of a dying person become fixed in a stare, his soul cannot escape and his agony is prolonged. That is why the Matacos cover the faces of the dying with a piece of cloth and knot it about the throat. This cloth often contributes to accelerate the end by asphyxiating them. Their rush to bury the dead is so great that it sometimes results in the interment of persons who are still alive.

764 The widow, her head shaved, is isolated in a corner of the hut, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain, or else she is placed in a small annex attached to the hut.

[762] Immediately after the death of a young man who had committed suicide in the village of San Patricio, his mother crouched on the earth, placed the dead boy's head on her knees and began to grieve for him, saying repeatedly the word "yos," "yos" (my son, my son). The father beat a drum, day and night in accompaniment of a dirge in which the expression "yos," "yos," was much in evidence. A group of women, under the direction of the mother who was shaking a rattle [18] executed a dance which consisted of little jumpy steps near the place where the corpse had been placed before the burial.

587] A widower or a widow may marry again two or three months after their spouse's demise. The women excuse themselves by saying: "I had to eat, I need someone who will clothe me."

Burial up in a tree, as described by Enrique Palavecino, used at one time to be very common in the middle region of the Bemejo.

Belief in the Reality of Dreams

● 787 842 The missionary Barbrooke Grubb has given numerous examples of the belief of the Lengua Indians in the reality of dreams. I have myself collected a good many examples of this belief among the Tobas and Pilagas. Here is an anecdote which illustrates this attitude among the Matacos. A girl from the village of San Patricio woke up weeping one beautiful morning. When asked about the cause of her sorrow, she answered that she had dreamed that she had had sexual relations with a young man and was afraid of becoming pregnant... (Footnote: Sent from the Smithsonian Institute of Washington by the author, a corresponding member. Translated from the French by Dr. Fernando Márquez Miranda, also a member).

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
533 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
●789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

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or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

C 581 593

Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelíte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeńlitse símă*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C 585

Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 836 584

Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M 585 789 535

When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

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them. The aim of the dance is partly to protect the former against supernatural dangers, an idea generally associated with the Indian ring-dances. But in addition, it seems to have special reference to marriage, for it is supposed in some mysterious way to influence the marriage candidates favourably. On this particular point, however, I did not receive further information from the Indians.

Lastly, we have to consider the marriage customs of the *Tobas*. The Tobas are generally monogamous for the simple reason that it is difficult for an ordinary man to maintain several wives and a large family, but there are exceptions to this rule. Polygamy is, however, allowed by custom, and if a Toba considers himself rich enough and has an opportunity of getting wives, it is of no rare occurrence that he marries two, three, or more women, who generally live in different villages owing to the jealousy they entertain for each other. This kind of polygamy is especially found among the great chiefs. Thus the famous cacique Taycolique has had in all ten wives. One has died, he has divorced five, and at the time of my stay among the Tobas he had four wives. Such great chiefs frequently separate themselves from their wives only for the sake of marrying some younger and prettier woman. The children of a divorced wife have not the same rights as the children of her supplanter, and if the eldest son is born of such a wife he cannot become chief on the death of his father; in this case the eldest son of the new wife will inherit the chieftainship. The father, however, does not break completely with the children of a divorced wife if they are adult, but maintains relations with them, and they sometimes visit their father.

Among the Tobas, as among most Chaco tribes, pre-nuptial chastity is almost unknown, great sexual liberty being allowed both boys and girls before marriage. As soon as a girl is marriageable, that is, has passed her first menstruation, she may choose casual lovers, and generally she does not fail to make use of her freedoom. Although in some parts of the country, the sexual liberty of the Toba girls seems to have degenerated into prostitution, there is no doubt that the social morality of the people has approved of this custom since ancient times. The young men and women meet at the dances, some of which, among the Tobas as among the Choroti, are intimately connected with the sexual life. The girls cannot, however, as among the Choroti, take the initiative in contracting marriage.

When a Toba man has found a girl whom he likes and wants for his

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112
Choroti SK6

M 304 inflammation in the face the girl has to fast for some days after the operation.

M 304 751 Tattooing has a purely magical significance, as may be inferred from the fact that the Mataco and the Choroti women regard it particularly as a protection against disease. Analyzing the custom, we can distinguish at least three factors in it, all of which are associated with magical ideas: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes) rubbed into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised which remain when the wounds have healed. Bleeding and scarification are common practices of purely magical significance among all Indians of South America, and as far as the Pilcomayo tribes are concerned I shall have occasion to mention this custom again in a later chapter. The very scars left after such operations are regarded as a protection against evil spirits. Further, that tattooing is done by means of ashes or soot is certainly not an accident. The use of ashes for superstitious purposes is of frequent occurrence among the Indians, the general idea being that ashes are a prophylactic against evil spirits. The custom of mixing ashes or soot with saliva is significant from the same point of view, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed to the saliva.

M [789] M [827]

C 304 751 789 All women among the Choroti are tattooed in the same way, that is, have the same marks and patterns applied to the face, and no full-grown woman lacks this tribal characteristic. Since tattooing is regarded as a permanent protection against evil spirits and sickness, it is natural that a woman lacking it should be shunned by the men, but it is not a means of attraction or a »decoration» in the common sense of the word.

T 304 184 [302] As to the *T o b a s*, tattooing or the custom of making indelible marks on the body or the face was formerly in vogue among all Toba tribes as among all peoples of the Guaycurú-group; but the Bolivian Tobas of the present day have dropped this custom, contenting themselves with simple body painting. Tattooing among the Tobas seems to have been limited to the female sex, as indeed is the rule among the Chaco tribes. According to d'Orbigny, the Toba girls were tattooed when they attained puberty and became marriageable. Since the custom is no longer practised by the Bolivian Tobas I have not seen how it is done by them. The procedure, however, is the same as among other Chaco tribes, incisions being made in the face and ashes rubbed into the wounds. As appears from the photographs of some Toba women which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche took in Buenos Aires in 1899 the tattooing practised by the Toba women was exceedingly elaborate and complicated.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noin* or *nõtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aitták slahsa is*, the Choroti *mõhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aitták* or *mõhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nõtta* (= *noin'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noin*.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter XIV.

Religious rites and ceremonies.

As I have pointed out, magical conjurations play the most important part in the religious life of the Chaco Indians. These conjurations are of different kinds, according to the different occasions on which they take place, or the particular purposes for which they are performed. In some cases the Indians simply try to frighten the evil spirits away by shouting and making a noise with instruments of some kind; in other cases they try to render them harmless by coërcing and compelling them. But the Indians also have recourse to magical conjurations with rattles, drums, dancing, etc. to influence good and beneficent spirits, for instance those animating certain trees and plants, or with a view to producing certain effects in nature or in the world of human beings merely on the principle of sympathetic magic. On the other hand, there is also a sort of worship, inasmuch as prayers are addressed to the individual guardian spirits in trouble and distress, and these prayers may, at least among the Tobas, be accompanied by offerings. 789

Those practices which may be referred to the category of »conjurations» apparently play the most important part. Being mostly performed by means of magical instruments of some kind, they are at any rate the most conspicuous. Prayers to a great extent escape observation and are kept more secret than other religious ceremonies.

1. Magical ceremonies to cure sickness.

We know already the general theory of disease held by the Chaco Indians. Most bodily evils from which the Indians suffer are, according to their belief, due to witchcraft, which implies that the illness has been sent by a human enemy, generally a malignant sorcerer. In this 753

[p. 131]

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755 535 placed in their midst .... The spectators remained to do honour to the treatment and increase its efficacy, but not without fear that the *ahút*, on quitting the body of the sick man might enter into theirs.[1])

This savage dance was typical of the Indian dances as far as they have the character of magical conjurations. The Indians firmly believe that they can terrify and expel the evil demon who has taken possession of the patient by violent movements and menacing gestures such as those just described. As to the ostrich feathers which the sorcerers had fastened to ankles, wrists, head and waist, some words of explanation may be added. The feather ornaments which the Indians wear in most of their dances and conjurations are not real ornaments but magical charms which eke out the powers emanating from the whole personality of the sorcerer. Like body-paintings, necklaces made of animals' teeth, rattle bells and gourds etc. they effectively help in conjuring the evil spirits.

The following is a conjuration accompanied by dancing which I myself witnessed in a Mataco village in the Bolivian Gran Chaco. Two Indian sorcerers were trying to cure a horse which was evidently badly attacked by an *aittáh* or *nahút*. The cure took place on various successive nights in an open place outside the *tolderia*. One of the sorcerers chanted in the usual way with his closed hand laid on the neck of the sick horse; the other both chanted and danced. Stamping with the feet alternately on the ground to the measure of his chant, he moved some ten steps away from the horse and then back again, repeating these movements several times. In his hand he held the rattle which he shook incessantly as an accompaniment to his dance and chanting. During the dance the man now and then took up a pebble or a small stick from the ground and threw it into the forest, spitting at the same time vigorously in the same direction. On the path where he moved he had laid some live embers. After a while the sorcerer interrupted his dance, stood close to the horse by the side of his colleague, and shaking the rattle heartily over the animal he shouted several times in a loud voice: *yame! yame! yame!*, that is to say, »go out, go out, go out!» These were the only words uttered during the whole conjuration. During his chanting the 755 sorcerers only pronounced refrains such *hō, hō, hō, a, a, a*, and so forth. 533 The tune which the dancer again and again repeated and accompanied with his rattle was the following:

[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 140.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SI46

Chapter XIV.

2. Other kinds of conjuration.

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From what has been stated above of the social customs of the Chaco Indians, we realize that there is hardly any important event in the life of these natives which is not celebrated with religious or magical ceremonies of some kind. Generally these ceremonies are simple: drumming, the shaking of rattles, dancing and chanting form the main features in all of them. A few words may be said in this connection about the magical instruments, the *drum* and the *rattle*.

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The drum, which is called *usyúk* by the Choroti, *huitsyúk* by the Mataco and *kaltaki* by the Tobas, is known to all Pilcomayo tribes, although it is nowadays little used by the Bolivian Tobas. It is a simple instrument, consisting of a small clay pot which is covered with a goat's or deer's skin. In beating the drum only one stick is used. Generally the pot is partly filled with water — a detail which I cannot exactly account for, since it has no perceptible influence upon the tone of the instrument. Probably the water is believed to eke out in some way its magical efficacy. The drum is the principal magical instrument of the Argentine Mataco who use the rattle gourd less, whereas, on the other hand, the Choroti, who also use both instruments, seem to appreciate the rattle more. In a Mataco village the drum is at work nearly every day: sometimes the spirit of a dead Indian is frightened away with it, sometimes other evil spirits, disease-spirits, spirits of hurricanes, tempests, drought, etc. are conjured with it; sometimes the Indians try to influence the good spirits animating trees and plants with it, so as to effect an abundant harvest of algaroba and chañar. The Choroti again mainly use the drum during the algaroba season, when the instrument is beaten both day and night. In a Choroti village where I lived for several months, an Indian sorcerer was specially engaged for this important ceremony.

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The object of the drumming was to »hurry on» the ripening of the algaroba and the chañar fruits, and at the same time to frighten away the evil spirits of hurricanes and tempests which frequently blight these trees at the time when they are flowering. Drought is another great danger to a rich algaroba and chañar harvest. By means of drumming the demons, who cause drought by keeping rain back, are conjured. In some cases it seems as if the drumming Indian, by the very time in which he is beating his drum, were imitating the fall of the rain-drops. The Choroti drummer seldom wears the rattle-belt (*tahús*), which on the other hand seems to be regarded as indispensable by the Mataco drummer. The latter, when he is beating the drum, continually moves his body up and down and from one side to the other in order that the rattle which he wears round the waist may make a noise.

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The other of the two principal magical instruments of the Chaco Indians is the rattle gourd, called *poketá* by the Tobas, *votsotáh* by the Mataco, and *pelīte* by the Choroti. It consists of a round or oval bottle-gourd, hollowed out through a small opening in the tapering stem, and then filled with dry seeds, generally of tusca, small shells, beads, or other things producing a rattling sound. The outside is often ornamented with lines, triangles, squares, or other geometric designs. The instrument, when shaken, is believed to have a remarkable »power», which is partly due to the magical properties of the gourd itself, partly to the seeds or other things with which it is filled, partly to the geometric figures with which the outside of the gourd is ornamented. The instrument is used much on the same occasions and for the same purposes as the drum. I have stated, however, that the *Choroti* not only use the *pelīte* to frighten away or conjure evil spirits in general, but also for certain positive ends. To shake the rattle is in the Choroti language called *nekeālitse;* when it is shaken for a special purpose they use the expression *nekeālitse sīmā*, which means more or less: »to shake the rattle to obtain something». Thus I have mentioned that during the marriage and courtship dances such young men as are despised by the girls are in the habit of shaking their rattles in order to »hurry on» the latter and to have greater success in love. Similarly, when a young man goes out to find a bride in connection with the dances, his father at home continually shakes the rattle to »hurry on» the girls on behalf of his son and promote his important undertaking. There are many other instances of the same kind. When the Choroti women go out in the forest in the morning to collect algaroba beans for the brewing of the sacred beer or other wild

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

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grew faster and faster, and the chanting accompanying them louder and louder. Soon he seized his magical instrument, the bell rattle called *heligday*, and shook it at first slowly and gradually faster, keeping time with his steps. When the dance reached its culmination, the feet of the dancer moved with intense rapidity, the chanting developed into an inarticulate yelling, and the man seemed to be in a real state of ecstasy. The other men also began to take part in the dance, accelerating their movements as well as their chanting gradually like the principal dancer, and accompanying themselves with their rattles. In this way the noisy performance was continued for several hours. Its object, as the Indians told me, was to promote the ripening of the chañar fruit. The dance seemed to have particular reference to the fruits already gathered, since the effect of all similar Indian dances usually follows on the principle of *pars pro toto*. The Indians evidently believe that the fast movements of the dancer in connection with the chanting and rattling are able to exert a mysterious influence upon the spirit animating the fruit, and the influence is not limited to the fruits gathered at the moment, but according to magical principles is believed to be extended to all plants of the species.

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Similarly the *Mataco* try to promote the processes of nature by dancing. Typical of this was a dance which Mataco and Choroti Indians once arranged in common at the sugar factories in northern Argentine, where they were employed as labourers to cut the cane. The dance was a kind of *Nahütsak* the object of which was to hurry on the ripening of the sugar plant. The Bolivian Mataco, some of which cultivate the sugar cane, are known to perform this magic dance in their own land too. A bundle of sugar canes, tied together, was held by two Indians in an erect position on the ground. Round these men the other Indians formed a circle. The women joined in, forming a larger circle behind the men, All started to dance, moving round the canes, stamping alternately with their feet on the ground and chanting with a loud voice, keeping time with their steps.

This magical dance to promote the growth of the sugar cane is obviously based on the same principle as the Toba dance just mentioned: the few canes round which the Mataco Indians performed their dance represented the whole field of sugar cane. The idea evidently underlying the rite was that after these specimens of the plant had been properly prepared — *i. e.* the indwelling spirit influenced in the desired direction — the rest of the canes in the fields were likewise favourably influenced.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI/2

A peculiarity of the *Nomí* is that it is the only Toba dance which takes place in the day-time; in fact, it is *always* performed during the day, just as other dances are always performed at night. Of the reason of this I am not quite sure, but it is probably to be sought in the particular character of the dance. Most Indian dances are in their nature conjurations of evil spirits, and since these spirits move about especially at night, it is conceivable that the dances are, as a rule, night ceremonies. The dance *Nomí* again, chiefly has for its object the promotion of fertility and the ripening of the algaroba fruit and therefore takes place in the day, just as the Choroti dances, in so far as they have the same object, often take place in the day. It is true that the *Nomí* is also intended to conjure the ghosts of the dead, but these differ from other spirits precisely in that they are generally believed to visit their living relatives in the day-time, when the drinking-feasts are celebrated.

The Mataco also have their festival dance, which in their language is called *Nakātin* or *Katináh*. It corresponds exactly to the Toba dance *Nomí*, and is performed during the algaroba season with the same object, namely, to secure an abundant harvest and to keep off the spirits of the dead, called *kasītah* by the Mataco.

Whether the Mataco have been influenced in this festival dance by their neighbours the Tobas, with whom they have considerable intercourse, I cannot say, but the idea that the dead like to visit the living at the time of the harvest and at the great drinking-feasts, is certainly familiar to many South American tribes. Thus the *Avas* and the *Chané*, who now live on the western border of the Chaco, but came originally to these regions from the north and cannot be reckoned among the Chaco tribes proper especially practise dancing at their drinking-feasts. Since on this particular point there is an interesting analogy between the customs of the Avas and those of the Chaco tribes, I shall mention what I know about the drinking-feasts of the Avas and the Chané. Their sacred drink is maize beer, called *cangūi* in the Guarani language, which exactly corresponds to the sacred beers brewed from the algaroba and some other fruits in the Chaco. The *cangūi* festivals of the Avas as well as the dance performed in connection with them have been described by the Catholic missionaries, but none of them seems to have realized the religious significance of these ceremonies. The majority of these Indians are now Christians in name and strongly influenced by Christian civilization, having consequently dropped or greatly modified many of their ancient customs. I myself have only witnessed their

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets.

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Avúshe*, when the young men try to »hurry on» the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the »power» lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings.

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: »These spirits . . . fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the tolderias (villages) or round the toldos (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm».[1]) This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible.

[1]) Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

CHAPTER XVII.

Magical ornaments and amulets.

In my *Civilization of the South American Indians* I have shown that most Indian ornaments have originally had a purely magical significance, although among tribes affected by European culture they have gradually lost this significance and become real »decorations». Among the Chaco Indians also this course of development is conspicuous, for instance with regard to tattooing, body-painting, and the majority of other personal ornaments. The principles of *tattooing*, as it is practised by the Choroti, Mataco, and Tobas, have been set forth by me in a previous chapter.[1]) Tattooing is first of all closely related to scarification and bleeding, customs quite commonly practised by the Indians in all parts of South America. Blood-letting is in itself regarded as a method of purifying the human organism from evil and impure spirits. The spirits are supposed to enter the system, and especially to mix in the blood, thus giving rise to ailments of different kinds and to a state of weakness in the particular part of the body to which they have attached themselves. The Indian thinks that by bleeding that part he will rid himself of the dangerous intruder, just as he sometimes thinks it will leave his body with the mere perspiration, and this belief is naturally supported by the fact that in certain cases such purgations may really give some relief. The Chaco Indians are quite familiar with this idea. Thus among the *Choroti* it is a common thing for the men to bleed themselves with a sharp bone obtained from a certain »magical» animal or a splinter of a certain wood before certain important undertakings. Thus they say that, by drawing blood from the arm, the limb will get more strength for pulling the bow; the practice is therefore especially

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[1]) See *supra*, pp. 89 sq.

[p. 179]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 783 827 [224] resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arms fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the idea of the Choroti, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood; and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The same custom is practised by other tribes of the Pilcomayo. Thus C 171 Nordenskiöld noticed it among the Ashluslay, although he did not understand its real meaning. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition, he says, the Indians may be seen to pierce their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes. In both cases the idea evidently is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body and perhaps killed with the pointed instrument.

M 304 783 The scars left by the cuts are tended with care and shown with satisfaction, indeed with pride. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which the *palometa* fishes had inflicted on their body with their sharp teeth when they were bathing in the river. It is clear that according to the idea of the Indians not only the bleeding purges the body from impure matter and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous in regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with European civilization, M 751 783 304 namely, vaccination. I could myself appreciate the extraordinary importance ascribed to scars when during my stay at Esperanza I vaccinated a number of Chaco Indians who were employed as labourers at the sugar factory. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this one, and they therefore as a rule submitted to the vaccine inoculation without remonstration, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remained were regarded with wonder and admiration, and it was perfectly understood that they were a sort of warranty that the terrible disease would not attack the person wearing them.

M 302 189 Of all personal ornaments *body-painting* is the most important. All Chaco tribes practise it, and men and women alike. In the Chaco, as in other parts of South America, body-painting is essentially a custom of magical significance, as one can easily find out by considering the circumstances under which it is practised. The favourite colour of the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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The favourit colour of the
Indians is red or vermilion, the paint being obtained from the seeds of the plant *Bixa orellana*. But this beautiful shrub does not grow in the Gran Chaco. The Chaco tribes only obtain the paint they appreciate so much from the Indians in the north by means of intertribal commerce.

The Chaco Indians are also in the habit of blackening the face with soot or charcoal on certain occasions.

The typical way of painting the face both for men and women is either to colour the whole face and forehead red with *urucú*, or black with charcoal, or only to apply red or black spots, lines, small squares etc. to the cheeks, to the nose, round the mouth and above the eyes. The eye, which is the organ of the most important sense and the one most exposed to disorders, is generally painted with special care. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are only drawn along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled out; sometimes protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, especially by the women. Among the *Tobas*, persons of both sexes generally have the face and forehead painted red. But besides this typical facial painting the Toba women — seldom the men — are in the habit of making special patterns or ornaments upon their cheeks on certain occasions. The patterns used by the Tobas seem to be comparatively few in number; we do not find among them the same abundance of designs as for instance among the Choroti and the Ashluslay. Custom does not require that any special kind of pattern should be applied on a particular occasion. Every woman, for instance for a religious dance or feast, paints upon her face what designs she likes and invents at the moment.

If one asks a Toba girl why she paints her face, she will in most cases simply give the answer that it is considered beautiful, sometimes she will say that it is to please and attract the men. When I asked other people about the matter I was told that the Toba girls paint themselves when they particularly desired a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive for thus decorating the face, for facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, on closer inquiry I found that the Toba women are in the habit of painting themselves *at the time of their menses*, in order to have a protective charm against the evil influences of which they especially then stand in fear. The ideas

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

Among the *Mataco*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruhák*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *oráittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets,[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich, *Las comarcas vírgenes*, p. 231.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti, Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsel*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious. C 301 759

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *wruců*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not ornaments in the civilized sense of the word. C 301 751 M 751 301 C M 291 301 302

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures M 301 789 755

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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and they are not even meant to be decorations. Among the Choroti it was no rare thing to see old men and women — especially when they were suffering from some pulmonary catarrh or cough, or from rheumatism — wearing a cord or strap bound tightly round the chest. The idea appeared to be that the demon who had entered into the chest and caused the evil should be forced to leave the body or at least prevented from penetrating further. On one occasion I met an old woman whose right forearm had been paralyzed, probably through a fit of apoplexy. She had a dirty woollen band tied round the arm at the wrist, and when I wanted to remove the useless thing, she would not allow it, declaring that it was »good». I soon learnt that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and realised that the band was »good» as a sort of charm against the demon. Just as civilized people may, in a case of snake-bite, apply a ligature or cord round the bitten limb above the wound so as to prevent the poison from spreading, so the Indians consider such ligatures as preventive of evil spirits. Among the Choroti the band is not put on with any ceremonies, but probably the material itself is supposed to have some mysterious power. However this may be, in these cords or bands tied round the breast or the arms, we have, I think, the most simple specimens of bracelets, girdles, and other magical ornaments of the same type used by the Indians.

In addition to the magical ornaments here touched upon the Chaco Indians use various kinds of amulets and charms consisting of the tusks or claws of the jaguar or other wild animals, in feathers of birds, mussel shells etc., but I shall not dwell upon this side of the practical religion of the Indians. What I have still to pay particular attention to are their funeral rites and ceremonies.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

a) *Conception*

831 Sperm is located in the knee. In order to cause an abun-
262 dant secretion of sperm, it is advisable to drink broth and milk and to eat chickens. It is important not to drink the broth of a bird called *čana* for the child would then be lazy. In order to have healthy children it is highly recommended that the broth of an aquatic bird called *aṣkan* be drunk;
842 The child is formed by the sperm which is assimilated into milk. The »milk» coagulates and fills up the matrix, thus do children form themselves gradually. The presence of the child in a mother's womb prevents the blood from
[843] flowing and menstruation stops. Pregnancy lasts eight months.

842 It is impossible for a man not to procreate children. Only
789 women can be sterile. Sterility may occur because the woman has been stopped up by a medicine-man, thus man's »milk» can no longer penetrate into her bosom. This may be accounted for in two ways. A woman may ask a medicine-man to make her sterile, or a bad medicine-man may make a woman sterile in order to harm her family. Sterility may be cured by a medicine-man, but the task is not easy and there are few who will attempt it.

b) *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

843 A pregnant woman works but little, she most eat sufficient, but not too much, food. The child, still in the mother's womb, sucks the food absorbed by its father and mother and if they were to eat too much the child would get fat and would be unable to come out. The husband of an expectant mother must give up certain kinds or work. He cannot use a knife or an axe for the strokes of any cutting instrument might kill or wound the child. He must not wear boots lest the child's legs be crooked. If he keeps his hat on his head the skull of the child will be flat. He must not write with ink lest the child's face be covered with marks.

756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[562] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing.

Magic

● 789 609 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

5:Nordenskiöld E-5,1 (1908-1909, 1913) 1920
SF10 Chiriguano SF10
Chane SF8
Mataco SF7
South American Indians S3
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dance masks from the Chané. Where the latter learnt their use it is at present impossible to say.

The map 12 and table 15 show us the distribution of the mask in S. America.

The places at which burial masks have been found are indicated in the map by squares. In making out this list I have followed PATER SCHMIDT, to whose statements I am able to make a few additions. The fact of the Ona and Yahgan Indians having masks seems to prove that their use is very ancient in S. America. At a ceremony of exorcism among the Mataco I saw some men with pieces of cloth hanging over their faces. I take this to be the most primitive kind of mask.

Table 15 showing the Distribution in S. America. (map 12) of dancing masks and other masks.

3. Tapiete, R. M. L. 216.
4. Chiriguano, R. M. E. 601.
5. Chané.
8. Lengua, GRUBB Plate P. 180.
10. Araucanians, GUEVARA (1) Fig. 5; PATER SCHMIDT P. 1057.
11. Chamacoco, PATER SCHMIDT P. 1060.
13. Karajá, KRAUSE P. 331.
18. Quichua, ACOSTA T. 2, P. 225; SARMIENTO DE GAMBOA P. 68 (Burial masks); COBO V. 4, P. 102. »Y cada atambor tocaban cuatro indios principales vestidos de muy particular librea con camisetas coloradas hasta los pies con rapacejos blancos y colorados; encima se ponían unas pieles de leones desollados enteros y las cabezas vacías en las cuales les tenían puestas unas patenas, zarcillos en las orejas, y en lugar de sus dientes naturales, otros del mismo tamaño y forma.»
19. Aymara. Mestizos, Bolivia. Quite common during the carnival.

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new
●791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance,
776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a
846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which
[753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

said, is a'hót among the Matacos. 776

This confusion frees them, at least in so far as language is concerned, from the vice of intolerance which is so strong with us. So it is that they call our church tohuó-hoto'hi which literally means: "that which contains the a'hóts," that is, "the a'hohi or Christian gods."

This is also the term for cemetery, in which they are in agreement with the inhabitants of those parts who use the word pantheon, which among the Greeks was reserved for demigods and with us for persons of great fame.

In the Chaco and in the whole northern part of the Argentine Republic where people are more democratic, egalitarian, ironical and also ingenuous, the term pantheon is used to denote a plot of cleared, grass covered land. This plot is quite open to access and allows free entrance to jaguars and dogs who go there to feast at the expense of the fresh corpse of a white, Negro or mulatto, but certainly not of a Greek demigod or of even a member of more modern divinity!

At this rate there will come a time when the word pantheon will sound offensive.

Not only are the a'hóts able to enter into people, bewitch 776 them, become incarnate (allow me the neologism) in them and in [202] elements of an evil nature such as storms, smallpox, famine etc. but they are also able to wield daggers and even shoot with bows and arrows.

But it seems that they only indulge in this business of [791] shooting people with arrows when called upon by the witch doctors who, in Mataco, are called "háyagüé," and in Chiriguano, "ippaya." This seems also to be the case with the "gualicho" of the Araucano Indians, who in fact have a verb to express this action, which is "cúllin." The corresponding Mataco verb is "ioco."

It can readily be understood why the witch doctors have 411 chosen the arrow as the preferred weapon of the evil spirit, since 791 it is the only weapon in use among the Indians which lends itself to mystery and deceit because, as it is a projectile it can be loosed from any quarter and from afar, the bowman remaining hidden.

This state of affairs which is found among all the Chaco Indians is present also in the other savage nations of America, though admittedly, there are some -- in North America for instance -- among whom the existence of other invisible and good powers or beings have been recognized, called "manitos" and "oquis" by some.

Regarding this problem the Americans reason rather naively, though with a certain amount of wit: "why should one worry," they say, "about a being who is by nature good? Surely we need fear no evil from him because if he is good he will not wish to harm anyone." A metaphysician would say the same thing.

It must be confessed that all religions are a little weak regarding this (for want of a better term) original sin; for all preach or impose expiatory sacrifices to placate the supreme being's wrath.

Among those Chaco Indians who still preserve some hazy tradition rooted in the missionaries' teachings, a certain ceremony prevails, possibly the only one of a religious nature, which parodies a Christian rite. From time to time they gather around their old men and chiefs, the women on one side, the men on the other. In the center, on a pile of flowers they place an a'hót, a child who is to be a witch doctor. While at these meetings they talk, smoke and drink, and then go their separate ways saying that they have "been at mass." The witch doctors keep up a constant conversation with the God Child (1), and report

1. This function of "Child Witch Doctor" may be an Indian custom because something similar to it is to be found amongst the other Chaco Indians. (Ed.)

back to the people what he says.

In this ceremony as in all others the wizard or witch doctor always bends forward, covers himself, directs his speech downwards toward the ground (beneath the surface of which are the a'hóts). He first speaks in his normal tone of voice and then answers himself in penetrating, muffled tones which he varies to suit the nature of the particular a'hót, and the people think

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that the a'hót is really answering, not realizing that it is a ventriloqual trick.

I have remarked a number of times in these notes that the witch doctors are the mediators between the a'hóts and men, but they are also, in addition to this priestly function, doctors, -- in fact they are priests by reason of their being doctors. [786]

The association of religion with medicine seems to be a constant factor among primitive peoples and also among the uneducated classes of the present civilization. This fact provides fuel for reflection of a philosophic-historical type. According to historians there is every indication that it was already present among the American peoples and even Oviedo mentions coming upon it [204] in the island of Hispaniola. Robertson, that sober and wise historian of America explains the phenomenon succinctly when he says: "Superstition in its primitive form had its roots in man's natural impatience to free himself from a present evil and did not grow out of fear of the evils which awaited him in the life to come. So it is that its origin stems from medicine and not from religion."

I have no indication that the superstition of these Indians goes together with any cruel practice, nor have I read anything to the effect that this is the case among the other American savages.

The luxury of cruelty seems to be the exclusive prerogative of religions, among them being those primitive ones of Perú and, especially, Mexico.

Chapter X

The Cult of Graves

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The Indians practice a "grave cult," and it can be asserted that they have always done so.

Near the city of Santiago del Estero I have seen their burial mounds and the earthen jars they contain.

consideration in proportion to what was his while he was alive and amongst his neighbors of his own village. This belief causes them to show great reverence for those of their number who have died. 775

Despite the a'hóts' inclination for wandering about, they yet ever remain in the vicinity of the place where the bodies to which they belonged died.

The soul of a person who dies in a foreign place and who has not been given burial in his home territory, is condemned to wander alone, despised and sad in the midst of the souls of strangers.

I asked my guide why it was that fortune was so cruel with those wretches who, through no fault of their own, died and left their bodies far from their native place; to which he answered: "The mere fact of these bodies having been left abandoned in a far off place by their companions and by the sons of the same tribe, was a sign that while they were alive they had not enjoyed the love and esteem of the others. The foreign a'hóts on seeing the soul of an outsider make an appearance amongst them reason in this way: 'if the person to whom this soul belonged was not honored by his companions or by the sons of his own tribe, nor given burial befitting a brother, then he was neither loved nor esteemed by his own people.' This being so, then they also shun him and leave him alone." I only repeat the rascal's words. 766

This reminds me of the veneration which the peoples of all nations accord to their burial grounds, and, in this matter of the souls of the unburied being condemned to wander, these Indians have the same beliefs as the ancient Romans according to what Virgil so beautifully expresses in the Aenead.

These beliefs are the basis of the ceremonies to cure the sick and to bury the dead.

But before entering upon their description I must call attention to a sort of star cult, especially amongst the women. These heavenly bodies are the moon and the morning star. 821 795

When the moon rises the women leave their huts and, holding hands, form a circle and begin to wheel rapidly, jumping and shouting in honor of the silvery moon.

They do the same thing when the morning star appears on the eastern horizon, and pray to it that the algarrobo pod crop and other wild fruits may be abundant.

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At midnight also they sometimes break their sleep and men [200] and women together form into a circle and jump and shout in order to win the favor of heaven.

During lunar and solar eclipses they gather together to implore the cessation of the inexplicable phenomenon. Here, however, they have dealings with an a'hót whom they summon and fear.

These are the only acts of worship of which I have knowledge, and they show the inclination of these savages toward sabianism or the religion of stars; yet the sun does not play a part amongst the objects of their worship or of their summoning. According to Faustino the interpreter, they only get together to conjure up the sun's reappearance when it has been hidden behind clouds for a long time (an extremely rare occurrence in that region) or if a storm is coming up -- and even then it is not the sun but the a'hót itself which they conjure because they are being deprived of the light and warmth of the beneficial star.

One can therefore perceive that among these Indians also it is the women who start the worship process and who, as was the case amongst the ancient pagan nations, have found in the pale moon the element most suited to their condition and therefore more able and better disposed to protect them. The sun, on the other hand, so dissimilar from the temperament of womankind, seems to await the worship of men, but they are not so prone to be influenced by fears, hopes and prayers as are the women.

I have not seen idols in any of the places to which my curiosity has guided me to search for them, and my guides have always denied their existence. The Indians' outlook however does not seem to be one which would find the acceptance of idols difficult. In addition to that semi-worship of the heavenly bodies which has been alluded to it is probable that every object in nature having particular characteristics, be they terrifying or beneficial or mysterious, calls forth some response from the Indian which may be close to adoration.

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Mr. Braly, an engineer who has traveled in that part of the Chaco in the vicinity of the Salado River, assures me that the Mocoví Indians of those parts will not leave the place where the aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with a terrible noise and blinding flash of light.

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This state of affairs which is found among all the Chaco Indians is present also in the other savage nations of America, though admittedly, there are some -- in North America for instance -- among whom the existence of other invisible and good powers or beings have been recognized, called "manitos" and "oquis" by some.

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In this ceremony as in all others the wizard or witch doctor always bends forward, covers himself, directs his speech downwards toward the ground (beneath the surface of which are the a'hóts). He first speaks in his normal tone of voice and then answers himself in penetrating, muffled tones which he varies to suit the nature of the particular a'hót, and the people think

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17

Choroti SK6

I have so far only spoken of the dances and other rites which take place at the preparation of the sacred drinks. During the algaroba season, festivals are held almost continuously, and these festivals are chiefly celebrated with drinking-bouts and dancing. Those of the Chaco Indians who have been in contact with the whites and seen the great festival with which, in Argentine and Boliva, they celebrate their carnival in February say that the algaroba season is their own carnival time and that they, too, have their carnival dances. The dances which among the Choroti take place at that time have partly been described before in connection with the customs practised by these Indians at courtship and marriage. In addition to the customary courtship dance *Avúshe*, the great festival, which is called *lāknene*, is celebrated with two more dances, those called *Ahlénta* and *Jóhlōki*. *Jóhlōki* is the name by which the Choroti call the Tobas, a fact that seems to indicate that the Choroti have borrowed the dance from their neighbours. The Tobas themselves call the dance *Nahotti*. It is a ring-dance; the dancing men are arranged in a circle and have their arms round each other's waists, moving round to the right or to the left to the rhythm of a chant. The *Ahlénta* again is identical with the Toba dance *Nomi*. Nevertheless, the Choroti seem to have borrowed it from their southern neighbours, the Ashluslay Indians on the lower Pilcomayo, a fact that may be inferred from the name; for just as *Jóhlōki* means »the Toba dance«, so *Ahlénta* means »the Ashluslay dance« (Choroti *Ahle* = Ashluslay). I would add in this connection that the dances of the Chaco tribes are, in the main, common to all the tribes; there are certain dances which occur among different tribes under different names.

The chants sung at the dances are rather monotonous and are composed of a series of words which apparently have no meaning; for instance in the *Jóhlōki*:

Hä-e-sa-alia,
Hiáh-hia-ália,
He-éh-hia-ália, hia-ália,
Hi-áh,
Hä-he-éh, hä-he-éh,
Hä-se-éh, hä-se-éh, hä-se-éh, etc.

Only the younger unmarried men perform these dances, the older ones being constantly engaged in drinking algaroba beer (*atās*). Unmarried girls are allowed to be present, but as we have seen they do not as a rule

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air
756 rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medi-
783 cine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were
796 arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone
[534] whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked
[242] over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war
[237] shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand.
[302] The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/212 cont./

755 The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical
756 to the one the medicine men make heard during the treatment
783 of illnesses. The singing was given rhythm by the rattling of
796 the maracas, and, from time to time, by the sound of the bands of rattles and hoofs and blasts of the whistles. Each whistle blast marks a new stage in the performances connected with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine man, as well as his arrival or departure from a given place). The maraca was sometimes held in a threatening manner as if to repulse an invisible being; the same gesture was made by those who held ostrich feathers. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, one or another of the officiants took the ha'tax powder. One of the officiants ran behind and in front of his colleagues, dusting them from head to toe with a feather in his hand; he was assisted by another man, who made the rattles and little bells on their backs jingle. After having taken some ha'tax the officiants began to sing again, to brandish their maracas, and to make threatening gestures with them or with the feathers. Some medicine men were singing the song appropriate for their spirits, without concerning themselves with the recitative chants of their confreres.

The direct offensive against the illness followed these preliminaries: some individuals stopped out of the row, brandishing their maracas and feathers violently, and then returned to their places. Another began to throw up some dirt with his foot and was immediately followed by another who, seizing handfuls of dust, threw it in front of himself. Then one of them unsheathed his liana-cutter and began to cut the grass around him; his example was followed by almost the entire group, which threw itself into the assault on the illness. Some obstinately set upon one spot, as if they had at last driven the enemy into a corner, and beat it with redoubled blows of their liana-cutters or feather brooms, and then stamped on it as though they were burying their victim. The attack on the illness lasted rather long and was executed with great seriousness.

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755 756 783 796 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164 231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

Los Indios Matacos y su Lengua
[The Mataco Indians and their Language]

by
Juan Pelleschi (Engineer)
with an introduction by
Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo, M.A.

Part I

Preliminary Introduction

114

Before Mr. Juan Pelleschi published his interesting and painstaking book "Ocho Meses en el Gran Chaco" [Eight Months in the Gran Chaco] the language of the Matacos was practically unknown, although it was common knowledge that many tribes spoke it. It is hard to understand how this language could have disappeared so completely without leaving so much as a trace in the archives of the Jesuit Fathers; but the fact is that even at the beginning of the past century Father Machoni himself complained about the loss of grammars and vocabularies of the Tonocoté language, with which language I identify the Mataco-Mataguayo tongue [797] and which was the language used by the Jesuit missionaries to indoctrinate and evangelize these Indians.

In the early part of this century Hervás and Adelung, the former with his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" [Catalogue of Languages] the latter with his "Mithridates," were able to mention only the name of the language, as though to have on record that they were aware of its existence, but they lamented that they had been unable to secure a single fact in regard to it, not even a Pater Noster with which to illustrate their extremely sparse knowledge of this interesting group of languages spoken by countless Indians, (that is to say by Chaco Indians). The fact is that some time later the scholarly French traveler Alcides d'Orbigny, took

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Translator's Note: The Spanish word "cristiano" when used as a noun which literally means "Christian" has been translated throughout as "white man" or "white," since the translator feels that this is really closer to its basic meaning. "Non-Indian" might have been used instead but it seemed cumbersome and did not carry with it the tone of superiority which both "cristiano" in Spanish and "white" in English (however unfortunately) carry.

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175 at which the Bermejo river flows into the Paraguay, with the object of converting the numberless tribes which surrounded it. It was estimated that a hundred thousand Indians lived in the environs and Fathers Fonte and Angulo were their teachers. Almost all of the groups of Indians were Frontones, [Frente = Forehead--Translator], a name which was given to them because of their habit of shaving off the hair on the forward part of their heads.

These Indians hung clubs and handsful of arrows at their belts, and carried a staff or rod to which were attached many fish jaws, which looked like saws. They would go about naked, their bodies covered with paint to inspire terror. They were very jealous of their borders, and by way of warning they would hang the bodies of the enemies they had killed on trees. They were nomadic, and carried their camps from one place to another. [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator].

"Practically every group has a different tongue, and to such a degree does this variety reach that one can say that some eight languages are spoken on either side of the Bermejo river. And the greatest impediment in teaching these people is this variety of languages."

Many of these Indians must have belonged to those whom we call Matacos, yet not necessarily Frentones, since Techo says:- "Pooro gentem ferme hanc omnem ideo Frontones Hipani vocabant," which is the same as saying almost, but not all, were Frentones. That some must have been Matacos can be deduced from the end of Chapter 41: [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator] "But Barcena and Añasco, after leaving the territory of Tucuman, had reached the city of Concepcion, intending to establish themselves among the Matarães; and from there, as circumstances might permit, to go to the Frentones and try to win them over."

It is quite clear from this that the documents which Father Techo referred to made a clear distinction between Matarães and Frentones, since the former were Matacos and the latter Guaycurúes, i.e., Tobas, Mocovíes, Abipones, etc. [565]

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Description of the Matarães - Chapter 42. Year 1591.

For many reasons it is here advisable to reproduce the Latin text [Latin parallel text omitted, see foreign text--Translator]: "The

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175 Matará nation, compared to the other neighboring tribes, is very
797 docile. They used to live scattered about in small groups, as is the custom of the Barbarians, until Alonso Vera, founder and Adelantado of Concepción, made them live together in a town, and had most of them baptized. Evil having become rampant however, it happened that they were unfortunate enough to have as their first Ministers of the Sacrament priests who were absolutely worthless, to the point that they were completely ignorant of even the most elemental mysteries regarding Christian matters. After receiving baptism, not one of the neophytes had ever practiced holy confession. Among almost seven thousand inhabitants many were unbaptized, some being children and some adults. The facilities of the place however were in no way pleasant, humanly speaking—drinking water, muddy and stagnant, was collected when it rained in holes dug in the earth by hand. Corn and a type of pumpkin was their sole food. But that awfulness, both of men and of the place, the great suffering, and the attempting of difficult things for Christ, far from discouraging the members of the Company who took on the task, served only to gladden them. And they, distributing the tasks among themselves and using the Tonocoté language, brought about in a short time, that no one among that whole populace live in concubinage, having anything to do with the superstitions of their forebears or dare, on Sundays or other holy days to be absent from the sermon or from doctrinal classes. Most of them, by dint of frequent confession, were free from all guilt and penalty, disciplined themselves rigorously each week and with the utmost reverence toward the Body of Christ, communed. All were under the guidance of teachers who taught them both publicly and privately those religious exercises practiced by christians of long standing, for the edification of the people." [566]

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175 The mild Matáres put up with a great deal. And while the good
797 Fathers were evangelizing these docile catechumens, they were doubling their efforts in another direction, as Father Techo recounts in chapter 43 [Latin parallel text omitted--Translator]: "But that work was as nothing compared to the other undertaken by the Fathers when they exerted themselves in the learning of the several languages spoken by the Frentones. The Frentones being actually the reason for their coming, they must needs learn the language they used in order to be of any help to them. Thus it was that, in the course of a year and

SI7 Mataco SI 7
Chaco Indians SK4
Tonocote SI 13

M C 175 797 a half, Alonso Bárcena, an old man 65 years of age, on fire with zeal to win souls for Christ, sharing his studies with Pedro Agnasco, learned the Guarany, Natica, Quisoquina, Abipona, and Quiranguica languages, and put together vocabularies, grammars, doctrinal teachings and sermons, each for its respective use. Both of these men, before leaving Tucuman, had mastered and worked out a grammar and lexion of the Tonocoté, Kakana, Paquina and Quirandica languages, so that the Fathers who might be about to enter districts where these languages were spoken would have the way made easier. And in order that their usefulness be more widely disseminated Pedro Agnasco transcribed most of them many times, particularly the work which Alonso Bárcena had done, in a very neat hand, and, thus copied out, he gave them out for general use."

M C 114 We have here a series of very interesting facts, for not only do we learn to distinguish between one tongue and another, but we discover also the origin of that valuable Toba MS, which is at present in General Mitre's library, attributed to Father Bárcena, and which actually is very neatly written, and was not in the least bit troublesome when a transcription of it had to be made for the series on Argentine Languages. The two famous notebooks, although hardly full enough to learn Toba from, are invaluable, because they allow us to see the Toba spoken in 1592.

The chapter referred to ends with a well deserved eulogy of Fathers Bárcena and Agnasco. How many evil things can be accounted to the expulsion of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus! To that event we owe the many gaps in the chain of American languages [567]. The confusion and loss of documents was widespread, calamitous and even down to the present day we are lacking those grammars of the Kaka and Tonocoté languages which are of so much interest to history, ethnology and linguistics.

IV

M T 175 797 The Mission to the Frentones, time lost and other Matará matters.

Devoratis tot linguarum difficultatibus, says Father Techo in chapter 44. The missionaries began their efforts toward the Frentones via

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the Mogosnas and Naticas. "Verum (nevertheless), Deum immortalem, quo successu?" The Mogosnas had killed Francisco Vera de Aragon, the Frentones were in a state of great turmoil, and the Fathers had no other recourse but to return to their base mission among the Matarães. On that occasion no good was harvested from so much effort expended on learning the languages of the Frentones; but linguistics as a whole did gain something, and once again the Fathers of the Company gave evidence that for them martyrdom was glory.

In 1596 Gaspar Monroy and Juan Viana visited the Tonocotés and traversed the territory previously evangelized by Father Bárcena. (Techo, "Historia de la Provincia Jesuítica del Paraguay," L. II, cap. 8). [Techo, History of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, Vol. II, Chap. 8].

In 1608 Father Diego Torres essayed to traverse these districts, and regarding this journey Father Techo recounts the following in Book III, Chapter 28 [Parallel Latin text omitted--Translator]. "The state of the Frentones was a sad one, for they wished nothing other than to continue in their perverse customs, dominated by the enemy of the human race. And on seeing them spread out in their forays to the very frontiers of Perú, and on becoming aware that the Abipones, Matacos, Naticas, Mogosnas, and Tonocotés, nations related to the Frentones, were bound in the same captivity because of lack of priests, he felt himself constrained, following the example of Saint Xavier, to return to Europe and, in the Universities of Spain and Italy, to try by dint of exhortation to awaken among the students a feeling of compassion toward such peoples." [568]

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This quote is an important one, for even if we cannot be sure that Father Techo used the [Latin] term "agnatas" in its true and restricted meaning—relatives on the father's side—he has nevertheless given us a piece of ethnic-linguistic information of great importance and which he doubtless had from some well-informed person. If the Tonocotes, Mataguas and Mataguayos are our present day Matacos it is clear that they must have had ethnic and linguistic affinities with the other nations of the Guaicurú type, as will later on be demonstrated.

The peaceableness of the Matarães contrasted with the extreme fierceness of the Frentones is remarkable. This difference must be attributed to atavism, and from it we sha[redacted]ble to derive something of interest, as will be seen later.

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175 page 164 and following is so to the point that I must needs quote it in its entirety.

"The Mataguayo tongue is spoken by a quite populous nation, the most villainous in the whole Chaco, located between 21° and 24° of latitude and 315° to 317° of longitude, bordering on the territory of the Chiriguanos. The Indians of said nation are known to the Spaniards by the name of Mataguayos, a name taken from the Mataguayo tribe which used to do their agricultural [584] labor for them and also be useful in trading. The other tribes of the Mataguayo nation were known later as time went on under the names of Agoyas, Tentes, Tainoas (or Tainuzes), Palomos, Ajotas, Tañis (it is conjectured that this last tribe belongs to another nation). These names are no longer used, their place having been taken by the following: Matacos, Hueshuos, Pesatupos, Abuchetas, Imacos, etc.

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[197] All the tribes speak the same language with some small differences, as reported by Abbot Joseph Araoz, resident in Faenza, who was a missionary to the Mataguayos and compiled a grammar and a vocabulary of their language some forty years ago. However, by reason of the great length of time elapsed and owing also to his very advanced years, he no longer remembers the language which he has not attempted to keep in mind as it was useless to him under the present circumstances in which blessed Providence has placed us. The aforementioned Mr. Araoz put forth a great deal of effort together with other missionaries
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[197] towards the conversion of the Mataguayos, of which 100 were added to the Chiriguano mission station called Rosario. No small number of Jesuits, both in the past century and in the present one have striven for the conversion of the Mataguayos, but with no other result than that of martyrdom, as is recounted in volumes IX, X and XXIV of Father Charlevoix's Historia del Paraguay [History of Paraguay].

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175 "The Lule tongue, simple in its construction and different from the other American tongues, (of which I have any knowledge or whose grammatical elements I have read) is spoken in two Jesuit mission stations in the Chaco. These places, which are called Miraflores and Valbuena, belong to the diocese of Tucumán and stand on the banks of the Salado River, near the 25th degree of latitude and between 313° and 314° of longitude. Valbuena lies east of Miraflores, about twelve
V
175 leagues. Father Machoni, in his Lule grammar printed in 1732 (from
114 which I have extracted the grammatical compendium which I shall publish) gives a brief account of the nations that used to speak the Lule

000 of small stones contained in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

764 "They bury their dead very close to the surface, being satisfied to dig a shallow pit into which they place the corpse half sitting up, with a few small branches beneath and on top of him and a little earth. Because of this it often comes about that jaguars, who can easily dig up these careless graves, get a taste for human flesh and become man-eaters. Sometimes the Indians put a little pot of water in the grave for the deceased's benefit. They also commonly burn a few things which he had used, and also his hut. The relatives of the deceased have to go to his burial place and lament over it, accompanying their cries with the pimpin. These wailings, according to the locality, are repeated for some days. They have also other [177] customs which they have picked up from the Tobas, to whom they are related and with whom they are friendly."

181 "It can be seen, then, that the Mataco tribe is at present a very 648 miserable one. Their way of living and their customs, furthermore, and the circumstances of our times together with the region in which they live do not point to a particularly happy future. It certainly cannot be said that the Matacos who live in Bolivian territory are declared enemies of the [607] whites or Christians, rather is it true that they sometimes work for them and say that they are friends of the whites and wish to be treated as such, in spite of the fact that this friendship seems feigned, a cloak under which they can the better steal and conceal themselves. They rustle the Christians' cattle which they exchange with the Tobas for horses, and these in turn they trade off to the Christians for other things they need, saying that they have captured these animals from their enemies."

181 "Across from the Mission of San Francisco de Pilcomayo and ● 777 on the banks of the river (the Pilcomayo River--Translator) are the ruins of the Mission of San Antonio, made up of Matacos brought together in 1863 and which, after having been in Bella Esperanza for two or three years were transferred to this place, where they stayed, in quite sizeable numbers, until 1879, in which year they escaped, although groups of them had fled and returned more than once before. While they remained at the Mission little or nothing could be accomplished with them in any way—they would not even consent to allowing their little children to be baptized when at the point of death. The

181 final pretext which they gave for escaping was that their white neighbours wanted to kill them, and it seems that this was actually the 197 case; and the Matacos had good reason to fear some reprisal for they continued to have an understanding with the Tobas in whose company they indulged in periodic stealing. They wished, or at least some of them did, to return a short while later, but the Missionary Fathers did not dare to readmit them as they could clearly see that at that time they could not hope to accomplish anything with such a depraved, shiftless and untrustworthy people, and also because they deemed it prudent to quell the slanderous murmurings of the whites who kept saying that the missionaries were informers for the Indians and aided them in their raids."

"And nevertheless it is a fact that the Tobas and also the Matacos stole a hundred times less when they were with the missionaries than before they came to them and after they left. I merely refer to these matters in order to point out the difficulties, which still exist, of converting and civilizing the Matacos; it may be that later on the circumstances will change, and the difficulties will disappear or lessen." [608]

XVIII

Observations on the Preceding Chapter

According to Father Cardús the Matacos are the Mataguayos Notenes [sic], Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalaes, Chunupies, etc. One must not confuse these Chunupies with the Chulupies or Vilelas.

Here we see how the Noctenes can also be Notenes; and it would be interesting to find out what the dialect of the Malbalaes and Chunupies is like.

I have not thought it to be my business to abridge the reports of the Missionary Fathers because they are full of interesting facts and I am always wary of the personal element when the subject being treated is that of Indian nations around which there plays a certain discord among authors. Were I able to add anything, regarding these Indians, from personal observation, that would be another matter; but my field is limited to languages and I really needed trustworthy background material such as this in order to set the stage for what will later be said regarding the Mataco language and its co-dialects.

This state of affairs which is found among all the Chaco Indians is present also in the other savage nations of America, though admittedly, there are some -- in North America for instance -- among whom the existence of other invisible and good powers or beings have been recognized, called "manitos" and "oquis" by some.

Regarding this problem the Americans reason rather naively, though with a certain amount of wit: "why should one worry," they say, "about a being who is by nature good? Surely we need fear no evil from him because if he is good he will not wish to harm anyone." A metaphysician would say the same thing.

It must be confessed that all religions are a little weak regarding this (for want of a better term) original sin; for all preach or impose expiatory sacrifices to placate the supreme being's wrath.

Among those Chaco Indians who still preserve some hazy tradition rooted in the missionaries' teachings, a certain ceremony prevails, possibly the only one of a religious nature, which parodies a Christian rite. From time to time they gather around their old men and chiefs, the women on one side, the men on the other. In the center, on a pile of flowers they place an a'hót, a child who is to be a witch doctor. While at these meetings they talk, smoke and drink, and then go their separate ways saying that they have "been at mass." The witch doctors keep up a constant conversation with the God Child (1), and report

1. This function of "Child Witch Doctor" may be an Indian custom because something similar to it is to be found amongst the other Chaco Indians. (Ed.)

back to the people what he says.

In this ceremony as in all others the wizard or witch doctor always bends forward, covers himself, directs his speech downwards toward the ground (beneath the surface of which are the a'hóts). He first speaks in his normal tone of voice and then answers himself in penetrating, muffled tones which he varies to suit the nature of the particular a'hót, and the people think

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter IX.

Social morality. Property. Law.

In the chapter on the social organisation of the Chaco tribes I had occasion to mention the social sympathy and feeling of solidarity which unites all members of the tribe, manifesting itself amongst other things in the widest hospitality. A few words may be added in this chapter to illustrate this characteristic feature of the social life of these Indians.

Mr. Barbrooke Grubb, who is probably the greatest living authority on the Chaco Indians, regards the »socialism» prevailing among these Indians as their greatest curse. According to him, it discourages competition in the way of one man striving to rise superior to his fellow-men and effectively impedes cultural progress in general. No Indian is encouraged to have more possessions than his neighbour, because, in obedience to the socialistic law, he would have to work for the support of others of whom he does not approve. Accordingly he produces no more than is absolutely necessary for current needs. He never saves anything for the day of adversity because others are not doing the same and therefore, if he had a store in reserve, the thriftless would step in and share it with him. It is owing to this system that the Chaco Indian has become the thriftless, lazy, and selfish fellow that he is. The chief endeavour of the Mission led by Mr. Grubb therefore was not only to impart to the Indians true Christian civilization in general, but particularly to destroy their old socialistic system with a view to making them self-reliant workers accumulating property by their own efforts.[1])

Mr. Grubb has naturally looked upon the conditions and moral character of the Indians with the eyes of a Christian missionary and may be quite right in his general contentions as to the best methods of civilizing a pagan

[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* pp. 189 sqq.

[p. 92]

I had not planned to investigate. I hoped that the notes I took then would be useful for a more systematic and complete study of the Matako in the future. I should never have thought of publishing these tales and documents had I not good reason to believe that there is little chance for me to return to the Chaco.[1] Even if destiny should take me again to that country, I do not know whether the same material would be available. The disappearance of the old native cultures in South America is rapid, especially among tribes of a low cultural level.

The Matako, more than any other Chaco tribe, have been exposed to the degrading influence of white colonists, but there still remain some villages, especially on the upper Pilcomayo and on the middle course of the Bermejo, where the natives live according to ancient standards. Those who had their villages along the »linea«, the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación, were the most miserable wretches that I saw in South America. Generous English missionaries try with very precarious means to rescue the Indians by extending to them the protection of the Mission stations and by helping during the critical period of transition from their native culture toward a new form of life. The mission work among the Matako has proved most successful. The Indians have shown extraordinary aptitude and under the direction of the English missionaries they display remarkable talents in crafts that they ignored completely a few years ago. Their zest for instruction has always been deep and their enthusiasm must sometimes be moderated. The rapidity and ease with which the Matako adapt themselves to our modern civilization remains one of the most puzzling problems that I met with in South America. Seen in their native environment the Matako seem to be the most irreducible tribe of the Chaco. Even their physical aspect carries an impression of

[1] I was unable to check many of the ethnological data given in the notes. To make them scientifically available I have reproduced the information in the very terms of the Indians.

5: Folk E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realised that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 178 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

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estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

762 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the
[197] English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins
[115] Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the
[824] fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of
262 suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in
251 the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and
252 before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions,
762 foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes
164 jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

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and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizzines increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

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naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered. According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

Third case. A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was discovered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

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forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary

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family suspected that she had taken the fruit although she showed none of the usual symptoms. One of her sons asked the missionary for help. As soon as she realized she had been discovered, she jumped up and vehemently denied having taken poison. The son insisted that she had and that she was trying to deceive her family and the missionary. To make sure that she was in no danger, the missionary decided to give her an emetic. The old woman struggled violently, throwing off everyone who approached her; only after an hour's strenuous fight was she overcome and forced to take the purge. Of course her stomach contained large quantities of the poison, which she had timed very carefully to take effect early in the morning when everyone would be deep in sleep and, therefore, unaware of her condition. Had it not been for her son's persistence, she undoubtedly would have been found dead the next day. Her husband, who was devoted to her, appeared to be quite unconcerned and, had the matter been left with him, would have done nothing to save her.

In general, love affairs are said to be the main cause of these suicides. They are particularly frequent on the occasions of the nightly dances which are closely connected with the sexual life of the Matako and at such times may take epidemic proportions. A young man will take poison for some reason and soon after others follow suit. Asked why they try to kill themselves, they explain that they feel compelled to do so by some superior force. The fruit attracts them; the desire to eat it becomes an obsession. When they walk in the bush their attention becomes riveted upon the fruit, which they see everywhere, until the temptation becomes too strong and they eat it.

Young boys at school are quite likely to take poison when they have been scolded by their teacher. For this reason the missionaries must exercise particular care to avoid offense when the poisonous fruit is ripe and, consequently, especially dangerous.

Actually there is a great deal of ostentation in these suicides. It is likely that many who take poison, do not take a fatal dose. Those who really wish to die generally take the poison secretly and try to conceal the fact until it is too late to help them. The others, on the contrary, boast about what they have done and are willing, even eager to get medical treatment.

This mania also has its simulators and fakers. Certain individuals imitate all the clinical symptoms, —convulsions, foaming, etc.— without having tasted the deadly fruit. Here again the desire to show off, to be the center of attention is foremost. Every suicide attempt provokes turmoil in the village and everyone flocks to the house where

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762 the victim awaits death. It is said that some men take poison to blackmail a woman into complying with their wishes.

It has been noticed time and again that only young people eat sachasandia as a rule. Among the cases cited above there is only one of an elderly woman who attempted to take her life. In this connection, the question arises of whether suicides are more common among women than among men. No data on this point have been gathered, but it is the impression of the missionaries that suicide is equally common among men and women with perhaps a slight majority among women. The first problem raised by the frequency of these suicides is whether the suicides are caused by new conditions of life —by culture clash and lack, of adjustment to a new world— or whether they were equally frequent formerly when the native culture still functioned? Since no Matako group now lives in its earlier surroundings, the truth of the matter will be difficult to learn. If the problem is presented to the missionaries who are largely responsible for the disappearance of the Indian culture, they always insist that suicides were one of the worst manifestations of the culture before the Indians were saved. They point out, moreover, that the number of suicides was particularly high at the time when the missionaries began their work in the region, and they establish a close relation between suicide and dancing. One of the missionaries wrote to me: "In the old days when the Indians were still dancing, there used to be as many as a dozen attempted suicides in one day, resulting in my being up most of the night going from one to another. They were so many and so frequent, however, and it happened so long ago that I can remember none in detail". This evidence is confirmed by other missionaries who recall that the worst epidemics always occured in connection with the night dances which have a decidedly sexual character. At such times young married men who took part in the entertainments slept with girls, thus arousing the jealousy of their wives and the anger of their mothers-in law. If as a result one or two people committed suicide, others would follow their example.

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The link established between night dances and suicide was the main reason for the strict tabu against dancing which is now enforced in every mission. Indians have been made so aware of the evil of dancing that even little girls have been kept from their normal and charming jumping about. Missionaries, however, are not responsible for this measure; it has been self-imposed by the Indians.

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No cases of suicide are known among other tribes who live in the same region and under similar conditions. At any rate, I have never

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been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

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terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

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Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 179 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 578 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [191]

M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make <u>chicha</u> because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

and at the very same time were dancing precisely the same dance underground immediately beneath them. The object of making so much noise was to intercept all communication with the sickness a'hots who were in the two men. The best doctor is the one who most jumps, howls and beats the earth with his feet. 755

The public who surrounded these goings on was there to give importance and greater virtue to the treatment, but the suspicion was in the air that the a'hot, on leaving the body of the possessed might take it into its mind to enter one of the other persons present.

This scene convinces me that: among the Indians, doctors earn their bread by the sweat of their... whole bodies; that among them also deceivers, by dint of much deceiving, finally [212] deceive themselves; and that the rabble was really convinced of the efficacy of the exorcisms.

And I was about to smile, moved by scorn and pity, but I remembered that c'etait tout comme chez nous [it was all much the same as it is with us--Translator] and... the smile died before it was born.

Chapter XII

Social Matters

These Indians do not differentiate the seasons of the year as we do, but rather by the several harvests: thus they speak of the season of algarrobo pod harvest, etc. 805

How could they even begin to divide the year into months or moons if they only count up to four? This very fact guarantees us a priori that they have not busied themselves with establishing the laws of the earth's or sun's movements. [802]

In spite of this it is remarkable that they divide the day up into innumerable portions according to the position of the sun, which takes the place of our hours. They also differentiate between various constellations such as the Pleiades, Venus, the Milky Way, and Centaur. [821]

And yet they do not have a word meaning "year." The Matacos use one, c-lúppe, which means period, and which has the same indeterminate meaning which that word has with us. Instead of "day," they say "sun" (i-qúa-la), and in place of "month,"

Chaco Indians SK4

Chapter X

Regarding Numerals

M C 802

In general it can be said that the Indians of the Chaco can count only up to four. This holds true for: the Mocovies who are bounded on the south by the provinces of Santa Fe and Córdoba and on the west by the province of Santiago; the Matacos who in the same direction have a common border with the latter and with Orán; the Tobas who are bounded by said nations and the river Paraguay, along the banks of which they penetrate Bolivian territory; the Vilelas and Chulupíes, who at the time of this writing amount to only a tribe or family or two and are either dispersed among the other nations named above or have been absorbed by them.

However, there also are the Chiriguanos and possibly other nations in addition, all of whom are established in the Bolivian section of that immense wooded plain called the Gran Chaco and who can count indefinitely. There are also the other Indian groupings who live in the northern regions of the Chaco and who are able to count beyond four if I am to give credence to my first mate on the boat who, although he was a Mataco, supplied me with terms expressive of larger figures. These he had gathered from outside contact.

A propos of this matter of being able to count only up to four, 000 I see that Quatrefages, in his last work La especie humana ["The Human Species"--Translator], seems to doubt this fact, which he interprets differently yet without supplying any explanation for his thesis. It would seem that he could not bring himself to admit such a phenomenon, and would only go as far as to accept that certain peoples might lack actual numbers beyond four but never the concept of such numbers. But even if we can accept such a hypothesis as possible psychologically so to speak, the facts, looked at from the point of view of philology, belie it. Understanding as we do that there is the closest of affinities between word and idea, one must admit that the latter, without the former, at very best can only exist in a vague, confused and undefined state which evades communication. We ourselves, for instance, are unable to use the technical terms of a given art or science of which we are not masters, however well we may know and differentiate between their products.

Just to clarify this I shall cite a personal case which will be helpful to the reader in arriving at an opinion.

I was talking to a chief who was recounting his feats of prowess to me for the first time.

In answer to my question: "Where are you from?" he unexpectedly answered: Num-maitta-ntocq-Téüj-tocuéy, stretching and then drawing back his right arm as he pointed towards the North.

[256] I was very much surprised and said, interrupting him: Ntde-ʾhije? -- "Where?" -- I had understood him to say that he wanted to tell me about a town on the Teuco River, called Umaitá like that town in Paraguay near the mouth of the Bermejo, and my curiosity became excited to a great pitch with the idea that I was about to make an ethnographic discovery of importance.

What he had actually tried to say to me was this: "I-(nu) killed many far away on the Teuco."

Nu ilon ntócq (I have killed many)...; and right away he commenced to count in Mataco from one to four, enclosing his right hand in his left and opening his fingers one by one, all except his thumb. But when he got to four he was at a loss how to go on, yet as he was squatting, he began to make vertical lines in the earth with his finger saying Toj each time he did so, which means "this one," and every now and then he would raise his head and his hand with his thumb concealed by his four fingers and say, looking at me: Uitd toj which means "and this also," and thus he continued about twenty times, always being careful to drive home to me that in addition to the lines he was making on the ground I must remember the original four which he had counted on his hand. At last he put an end to his counting by saying ntocq ntocq which is "many, many."

And this was very true. This chief had been at one time the scourge of the frontier whites and the whip of his Indian enemies until finally, old and much battered by the whites, he left off warring, gained a government pension and settled down with all his followers -- very much reduced in numbers -- near Fort Gorriti, on the left bank of the Bermejo River. It happened that near Fort Aguirre, on the right bank of the Teuco, some 50 kilometers northeast of Gorriti, another band of Indians had attempted an invasion but were themselves the object of a surprise attack in their village, part of their number being killed and others imprisoned.

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These latter, bound and with their hands tied behind their backs, elbow to elbow and forming a chain of some 30 or 40 individuals, were handed over to the chief so that he might put them to death. He did most of the killing himself with a spear. While the massacre was in progress most of the victims remained silent, while others kept up a continual murmuring such as is done in their religious ceremonies. These were, without a doubt, witchdoctors.

I passed through the place of this tragedy five years after the event and could see no sign of human bones belonging to the victims' unburied corpses. The flood waters had carried them off and the winds had covered all remains. Only after much searching and with the help of a soldier who had witnessed the event was I able to find three skulls by digging among some bushes. The national government tried to punish the officer in charge of Fort Aguirre and it [257] is possible that this was done. However, one must accept the fact that there is no possible compatibility between civilized and savage elements; and all individual philanthropy, all a priori reasoning made far from the scene, lose their practical validity in this theater of fighting brought about by the head-on collision of the two races. Each one thinks that the destruction of the enemy is the easiest and also the most natural expedient in the world. Therefore the final extermination of the Redskins at the hands of the whites is inevitable, by means of cold steel, fire, expatriation and mass dispersion as though they were beasts.

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Coming back to the matter of numerals, one must never be led to suppose that these Indians are not aware that 10 fish are half of 20 fish. A dog, when he rushes upon a second bone thrown to him and growls because some other dog tries to get the first bone, is also responding to the same perceptual stimulus. Nevertheless the fact of not possessing an adequate word for expressing this recognition reveals, in my opinion, a lack of abstraction. The form of a language and the very manner in which words evolve from their original sounds owe much to the state of maturity of the speakers' capability for mental abstraction.

Regarding the Mataco words used to indicate the first four numbers, I must say that their great length and the gesticulations which went with them surprised me very much. It seemed to me that each one of these expressions, if it was to justify its accompanying

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gesticulations, must be a whole sentence. Even though a great deal of time has elapsed I think I can still explain them and not fall into error as I do so.

"One" is hoté-cuuaj ›hi, and one finger is raised. One can also say hoteji and hotecoaji. Now hoté means "as," cuuáj means "finger," and hi (nasal h) is a particle which indicates possession, container etc. so, not worrying too much about this small elemental difference which is so common in every language, and especially in this one which undergoes so many shifts, we may say that the translation of hotécuaji is: "as finger has" ("this which I show").

"Two" is hoté quuasi, and two fingers are raised. Quuas is the plural, so to speak, of cuoaj according to this tongue, and thus the translation of the above is "as fingers has."

"Three" is laj tdi qua yél, and three fingers are raised, the little finger remaining folded and covered by the left hand. Now laj means "without" or "no"; el means "other"; quai is too similar to quoají to allow for doubt, and so we may say that the translation is "without the other finger." The same may be said for lája echecuoya -- "widower without a husband" [sic].

"Four" is tdi qualéss híquí and I don't know how to go about translating it literally and so shall not try. However one can perceive that in qualéss there is a plural iqui form, which is a word that often accompanies hi, and which [258] is to be found in phrases in which we have the idea of "to be" expressed, with other analogous ones -- it is therefore probable that it refers to the gestures which go with each numeral.

These gestures were not made only by that chief but also by other Indians of the central Chaco and by Faustino who could count as well as any of us. There must be some relation between the gestures and the words. The etymologies which I offer, in my opinion, explain the case more satisfactorily than those which are usually given in analogous philological problems.

However, one must not judge the worth and elegance of the original by the literal translations. Where would the elegance of most compound words be if we translated their Greek originals directly? For example; "Panorama" -- "all seen....!!"

And as far as the intellectual value of this manner of expressing numerals is concerned, is its genesis not quite natural? The Guaraní

and at the very same time were dancing precisely the same dance underground immediately beneath them. The object of making so much noise was to intercept all communication with the sickness a'hots who were in the two men. The best doctor is the one who most jumps, howls and beats the earth with his feet. 755

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"moon" (i-que-lacq). In this they agree with the languages of all nations, a thing which is still preserved amongst us in poetic usage, while the common language of prose has undergone such changes with the passage of time that the words no longer appear to have their primitive material significance of sun and moon. M 805

Either by analogy from "moon" to "a light" or vice versa, the fact is that the word for both "moon" and "a light" is the same. M

This is not true of the word for "fire," for to this element special properties are attributed as the Chiriguanos condemn the bodies of those who die in the odor, or rather, taste, of evil, to be burned; and the Tobas and Matacos burn all bodies. This practice among the two latter nations is to be explained by their desire to hasten as much as possible the final condition which will benefit the deceased, that is, that as soon as the fleshy parts are consumed the soul will be able to descend into the earth and be among its companions. C 764

[213] Despite the fact that they are innocent of matches and sulfur, not to mention steel for striking fire, since they have no flint, they can produce fire at will. I have already described the manner in which they do this, by twirling one stick rapidly upon another which is lying on the ground until the sawdust which results -- which looks like finely powdered roasted coffee grounds -- begins to glow. Then they heap a kind of highly combustible wood onto it, blow it until a flame appears and from this they can make as large a fire as they wish. One of the two sticks which they use is from the chilca bush, which is aromatic, resinous and porous and is found in abundance throughout the Argentine Republic. M 372

It is customary to say that each Indian does everything for himself, and that this is the cause for his slowness and backwardness. But this is not so. They may be wanderers, but they do not for this reason refrain from a certain distribution of labor. There are amongst them weapon makers, canoe builders, net makers, weavers, etc., who sell their manufactured goods to their companions and receive others in exchange for them. They have, then, their guilds of arts and skills, but in an embryonic stage, of course. They also have particular terms to express themselves in this field, which in Mataco are formed from the word which indicates an object plus a particle indicative of function. Of these particles <u>'hi</u> M 463 M 192 463

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What further attracts my attention is the following: Instead of our "night" they use a word which means "earth," that is, hunát hunná, just as for "day" they make use of their word for "sun," as if they had intended to oppose one to the other. It may not be too farfetched to see in this a sort of philosophy in which the earth and the sun represent two opposite principles: darkness and light, good and evil. I, however, have not been able to perceive any such philosophy in their ideology, although it is true that something of this sort -- somewhat materialized -- is to be found in their religion, as we have had occasion to see in an earlier section of this treatise.

And is this business of using the sun, or light, to express the idea of time not an intellectual parallel or approach to the Aryan, for from the Sanscrit dyu, that is "light" [Spanish luz--Translator] came the Latin dies, the Spanish día, and the Italian di, all of which mean "day" or "day's effort."

Meanwhile, in order to say "this afternoon" they say hunná and quiá-hunná, and for "last night," hunná-tzi-nná, keeping thus to the same form and sequence followed in the order of words which we saw in "today," "tomorrow," etc.

Furthermore, their expression for "sky" is ppe-lé, which must 192 be translated as "that which is above," from ppé, "above" and lé 821 which is a contraction of lél-lé or c-lel-lé, a patronimic word which is used to express the concept of origin, provenience, father-land, etc.

It is said that savages have no abstract ideas, but I ask, is the 192 idea of "always" or "never" abstract or not? Without waiting for an 196 answer I say that these Indians in question have the word inne-mid which expresses "never," and c-lam-mej for "always," which they derive, respectively, from innem -- "more" (Italian mai, Latin umquam) and the negative d; and from j-lam, meaning "same" plus the postposition ej.

It may be objected these are expressions made up of words which separately mean something more limited, which is valid as far as the objection goes. The French, let it be remembered [267] say toujours, "all the days," with the meaning of "always" and thus express an idea which is indefinite, or rather infinite, by means of a word which of itself has a limited meaning as is the case with "day." The fact of the matter is that a given abstraction is not

limited to the words used to convey it but hinges rather on the intention behind it. If this were not so what could one say in defense of the English word "always"? 192 196

While we are on this subject let me mention that the particles naje and nenná -- the latter sometimes missing its first syllable, sometimes its last and shifting from i to e [sic] -- are used to make two verb tenses. The first, that is naje, being employed for the remote past or preterite and the other for the past perfect. For example: "to return" is tapil; "he returned" is tapil láje; "he has returned" is tapil-lé (the second l in both cases is the same as n, as was explained above in the treatment of icuála-el-láje). 192 196 805

In place of "midday" or "noon" they say icuála icni, which, as far as I can make out means "high sun" or "up above sun"; and in order to convey the idea of "midnight" they say hunnat-quiú-nej, which I take to mean "low earth" or "underneath earth." For "it is early" they say inataj, and for "it is late," hunáj.

They have a syllable, tde, or dthé, or ntdé, which is the basic element for a great number of adverbs of place and of time. For example: "why?" is atdyécque; "where?" is tdené; "whence?" is dtel che; "how?" is atde-tzó; "how much?" is tde-hoté; "when?" is tdé-naj-hote. Hoté alone means "as," and naj expresses the further meaning that the question refers to a somewhat remote period in the past. Let it be noted that wherever a precedes it usually refers to "thou," since the question is asked of a second person. This goes to show how important it is to know the circumstances of time (tense) and person to which the questions refer, when writing the answers.

I am afraid that I shall bore the reader with this mass of data on the Mataco language, and yet I do not know, for the life of me how to keep from telling that little which I have been able to learn of it and gather in the limited free time allowed me by my professional work and which usually comes only in the very late hours of the night. If I make digressions to keep the reader from becoming tired I fear that I shall write too lengthily, and if I make no digressions and write a straight report I fear to be too dry and boring.... Certainly I know not which way to turn. Who will suggest some bright idea which will afford escape from this slough? No one? 700

that invasion took place which we had seen in preparation in the village of Chaguaral. Unfortunately moths got into it and ruined it, and I had no other recourse but to throw it out since it was no longer worth sending to Italy together with some skulls and other objects I had collected. 727

This custom of scalp taking is common to all the Indians hereabouts, and is also indulged in by those living in North America. The strange thing is that it was also practiced by the Scythians.

The Germans also were in the habit of drinking from the skulls of their fallen enemies. Who does not know about Albuin the Longobard who made his wife Rosamund drink from her father's skull some 1300 years ago? [171]

This Indian practice reminds me of something which, in my opinion, reflects the sagacity of these savages:

I was with the colonel of the regiment which was on duty on the frontier, on one of his periodic visits. Near a fort where an Indian tribe was camped the son of the general chief came to see him, (the chief himself did not make an appearance since he wished the colonel to call on him first) and made us a present of some very good and delicious aloja. As it happened that he had just returned from a raid upon the Tobas we asked him if he had not brought back a few scalps. The Indian, as though seeking an excuse for his cruelty said: "The Tobas take the scalps of white men and we take the scalps of the Tobas."

On this same occasion, seeing me dressed in the manner of country people, surrounded by army officers and standing beside the colonel who treated me with great consideration and respect, the Indians whispered among themselves: "Who do you suppose this one is?" And the more sophisticated answered "he must be some president or other!"

It seemed to me as I heard this idle chatter and banter that I was in the midst of a thickly crowded mass of our own lower classes.

[196] One of the superstitions among these Indians is to sally forth on their raiding expeditions with the new moon. They appear to attribute some magical virtue to it, yet they do not 721 821

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

consideration in proportion to what was his while he was alive and amongst his neighbors of his own village. This belief causes them to show great reverence for those of their number who have died. 775

Despite the a'hóts' inclination for wandering about, they yet ever remain in the vicinity of the place where the bodies to which they belonged died.

The soul of a person who dies in a foreign place and who has not been given burial in his home territory, is condemned to wander alone, despised and sad in the midst of the souls of strangers.

I asked my guide why it was that fortune was so cruel with those wretches who, through no fault of their own, died and left their bodies far from their native place; to which he answered: "The mere fact of these bodies having been left abandoned in a far off place by their companions and by the sons of the same tribe, was a sign that while they were alive they had not enjoyed the love and esteem of the others. The foreign a'hóts on seeing the soul of an outsider make an appearance amongst them reason in this way: 'if the person to whom this soul belonged was not honored by his companions or by the sons of his own tribe, nor given burial befitting a brother, then he was neither loved nor esteemed by his own people.' This being so, then they also shun him and leave him alone." I only repeat the rascal's words. 766

This reminds me of the veneration which the peoples of all nations accord to their burial grounds, and, in this matter of the souls of the unburied being condemned to wander, these Indians have the same beliefs as the ancient Romans according to what Virgil so beautifully expresses in the Aenead.

These beliefs are the basis of the ceremonies to cure the sick and to bury the dead.

But before entering upon their description I must call attention to a sort of star cult, especially amongst the women. These heavenly bodies are the moon and the morning star. 821 ● 795

When the moon rises the women leave their huts and, holding hands, form a circle and begin to wheel rapidly, jumping and shouting in honor of the silvery moon.

They do the same thing when the morning star appears on the eastern horizon, and pray to it that the algarrobo pod crop and other wild fruits may be abundant.

Ma 795 821

At midnight also they sometimes break their sleep and men [200] and women together form into a circle and jump and shout in order to win the favor of heaven.

During lunar and solar eclipses they gather together to implore the cessation of the inexplicable phenomenon. Here, however, they have dealings with an a'hŏt whom they summon and fear.

These are the only acts of worship of which I have knowledge, and they show the inclination of these savages toward sabianism or the religion of stars; yet the sun does not play a part amongst the objects of their worship or of their summoning. According to Faustino the interpreter, they only get together to conjure up the sun's reappearance when it has been hidden behind clouds for a long time (an extremely rare occurrence in that region) or if a storm is coming up -- and even then it is not the sun but the a'hŏt itself which they conjure because they are being deprived of the light and warmth of the beneficial star.

One can therefore perceive that among these Indians also it is the women who start the worship process and who, as was the case amongst the ancient pagan nations, have found in the pale moon the element most suited to their condition and therefore more able and better disposed to protect them. The sun, on the other hand, so dissimilar from the temperament of womankind, seems to await the worship of men, but they are not so prone to be influenced by fears, hopes and prayers as are the women.

I have not seen idols in any of the places to which my curiosity has guided me to search for them, and my guides have always denied their existence. The Indians' outlook however does not seem to be one which would find the acceptance of idols difficult. In addition to that semi-worship of the heavenly bodies which has been alluded to it is probable that every object in nature having particular characteristics, be they terrifying or beneficial or mysterious, calls forth some response from the Indian which may be close to adoration. MA 778

Mr. Braly, an engineer who has traveled in that part of the Chaco in the vicinity of the Salado River, assures me that the Mocoví Indians of those parts will not leave the place where the Aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with A terrible noise and blinding flash of light. Mo 778

and at the very same time were dancing precisely the same dance underground immediately beneath them. The object of making so much noise was to intercept all communication with the sickness a'hots who were in the two men. The best doctor is the one who most jumps, howls and beats the earth with his feet. 755

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And is this business of using the sun, or light, to express the idea of time not an intellectual parallel or approach to the Aryan, for from the Sanscrit dyu, that is "light" [Spanish luz--Translator] came the Latin dies, the Spanish día, and the Italian di, all of which mean "day" or "day's effort."

Meanwhile, in order to say "this afternoon" they say hunná and quiá-hunná, and for "last night," hunná-tzi-nná, keeping thus to the same form and sequence followed in the order of words which we saw in "today," "tomorrow," etc.

Furthermore, their expression for "sky" is ppe-lé, which must 192 be translated as "that which is above," from ppé, "above" and lé 821 which is a contraction of lél-lé or c-lel-lé, a patronimic word which is used to express the concept of origin, provenience, fatherland, etc.

It is said that savages have no abstract ideas, but I ask, is the 192 idea of "always" or "never" abstract or not? Without waiting for an 196 answer I say that these Indians in question have the word inne-mid which expresses "never," and c-lam-mej for "always," which they derive, respectively, from innem -- "more" (Italian mai, Latin umquam) and the negative d; and from j-lam, meaning "same" plus the postposition ej.

It may be objected these are expressions made up of words which separately mean something more limited, which is valid as far as the objection goes. The French, let it be remembered [267] say toujours, "all the days," with the meaning of "always" and thus express an idea which is indefinite, or rather infinite, by means of a word which of itself has a limited meaning as is the case with "day." The fact of the matter is that a given abstraction is not

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855 861 member of his own tribe. In the training of the Indian children the power of example and the natural desire to imitate has the most effect. It is interesting to note how the young boys constantly watch the occupations of the elder men and how easily in this way they acquire the necessary 868 skill in the same occupations, above all in fishing and hunting. When the Toba boy is about six or seven years old, his father makes him a small bow and arrows with which he frequently practises shooting, thus at an early age acquiring dexterity in managing the weapon. Similarly the girls follow their mothers everywhere, down to the river, to the fields, and the forest, keenly watching how she does her work and soon learning to do the same.

881 As far as I know, no particular ceremonies are performed among the Choroti and Mataco with young boys at the attainment of puberty, nor do the present day Tobas in Bolivia practise any ceremonies of this kind. According to some ancient writers, the Tobas of the 18th century practised certain ceremonies with young boys, consisting of a peculiar arrangement of their hair and in pricking them on the body with sharp-pointed bones, but since the particular purpose of these ceremonies was to initiate them into the profession of a warrior, I shall reserve the details till later on, in treating of Indian warfare.

On the other hand, when a young girl has her first menstruation and becomes marriageable, the incident is celebrated among all Chaco tribes with certain feasts, dances, beer-drinking, and purely religious rites. In order fully to understand these ceremonies it is necessary to know the ideas which the Indians entertain about the mysterious phenomena of puberty. It is by no means sufficient to say that the puberty ceremonies simply serve to initiate the girl into her coming sexual life; their significance is much deeper.

881 941 [821] The physiological process which causes the menstruation of the women, incomprehensible as it seems to the Indian, strikes him as something extremely mysterious and must needs give rise to certain superstitious beliefs. Thus both the Tobas and the other Chaco tribes seem to have the idea that this strange phenomenon is caused, or at any rate influenced, by the new moon. Moreover, since the menstrual periods, and especially the first menses, are as a rule connected with certain nervous disorders and other alterations in the physical condition of the woman, it is naturally thought that during these critical days she is seriously exposed to the influence of evil spirits. At the same time, of course, owing to the awakening sexual desire, the relationship between this physiological

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The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance, the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút telâh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyá*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamsa* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mataco for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

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M 776 in drought, in eclipses, etc. Thunder and lightning, for instance, are caused by the demons called *aitták tavakái pählai* (the »thunder demons»), which ●821 pass in great numbers through the air or above the clouds. Eclipses of the moon, on the other hand, are attributed to a demon called *aitták hayáh* which is supposed to prey upon the moon. The Mataco try to frighten away both the thunder-demons and the demon eclipsing the moon by shouting loudly and making a noise, and by beating drums.

M 775 774 The same may be said of the nature of the *aitták* and the *nahút* as has been said of the *möhsek* of the Choroti. It seems to me probable that they are in their origin nothing but spirits of the dead or disembodied human souls. From this point of view, I believe, Pelleschi is right when he says that the religion of the Mataco can be characterized as essentially a worship of souls. But there are disembodied souls of different kinds. The Mataco word for »soul» is *kasitah*. It is the soul that detaches itself from the body, temporarily during dreams, permanently in death. As a death-spirit the *kasitah* is generally the object of fear. Of these death-spirits some, which are particularly evil-minded, become *nahút* or personifications of mortal diseases, whereas others have become personifications of curable illnesses and lesser evils. It is a well known fact that the spirits of certain persons — especially of sorcerers and persons who have died a violent death — are greatly feared, and just such spirits are likely to M turn into that particular kind of demon whom the Mataco call *nahút*. The [764] fact that graves are regarded as the dwelling-places of these demons confirms the conclusion that the *nahút* are in their nature nothing but disembodied human souls.

T 776 As to the *T o b a s*, I have already mentioned that they call the spirits *peyák*. Like the Mataco, the Tobas fancy that these spirits appear in the shape of small boys (*nätolik*), and in daily life, when speaking of these beings, they more often use the word *nätolik* than the word *peyák*. Although the spirits in the main have human form, they at the same time resemble birds, and more particularly ostriches. At any rate the Tobas informed me that »the *peyák* have wings, large like those of the ostrich» — an idea quite natural to a people who even identify living men with ostriches. Still they are mostly invisible to the human eye; only the medicine-men who are endowed with a special clear-sightedness can see them and enter into communication with them. The whole world swarms with these mysterious beings, who are regarded as the causes of all evils that befall man. Everything that has been stated on this

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We have already seen that the most appreciated of these drinks is algaroba beer, which by the Mataco and the Choroti is called *atăs*, by the Tobas again *maplyí*. The tree itself and its fruit is called *oáh* in the Mataco and the Choroti language, in the Toba language *map*. The sacred beer is prepared with the utmost care and with certain religious or magical ceremonies. At this preparation there appears a strict division of labour between men and women. Although the women are not allowed to drink of the beer, they seemingly perform the larger part of the work. They collect the fruit in the forest, carrying it home in their large caraguatá bags, and afterwards mash it in mortars. Some old women start to chew the fruit, mixing it well with saliva, whereupon they spit it out into a goat's hide, fixed in the ground by means of sticks in such a way that it forms a sort of vessel. The goat's hide is used by the Choroti and by the Argentine Mataco, whereas the Tobas and the Bolivian Mataco use a wooden trough for the purpose. Lastly, hot water is poured over the mashed fruit.

These preparations require nearly a whole day. The most essential thing still remains, namely the fermentation, and to effect this is a duty solely incumbent on the men, since women as a rule do not take part in conjurations. The fermentation is sacred, because it means the birth of the good spirit. Now this happens in the night, but night is the time when evil spirits move about. According to the belief of the Indians, the invisible persecutors appear in great numbers in order to prevent the birth of the good spirit and interfere with the drink so that it cannot ferment and is entirely spoiled. Therefore special precautions must be taken for the critical time. The brewing of the algaroba beer for the great festivals during the algaroba season is — especially among the primitive Choroti — a matter that concerns the whole community. Hence, at the approach of night, the men arrive from all houses with their rattle gourds, sit round the hide or trough, and begin to chant a noisy, monotonous song without words, shaking the rattles in the rhythm of their chant. This ceremony is called by the Choroti *nissammaha oáh*, by the Tobas *niapiláh map*, and its most conspicuous object is to prevent the spirits from spoiling the beer. Since the new moon is believed to promote fermentation, a moonlight night is preferably chosen for the ceremony. The chant is typical of the Indian conjurations in the Chaco. It is always begun in a loud voice; then the voice gradually dies down, so that the last tones are only heard as a low and distant muttering. Thereupon they start again from the beginning, and so forth. In addi-

X 539 to get water they had to follow ropes to the river. There
X 773 were heavy storms and hail stones hurled through the roofs and the wind blew huts away. Many people died.

7. The Sun (Pedro)

X 539 The sun is a big medicine-man. When he is angry the
X 773 world turns to darkness. The sun has two huts one of which
821 he leaves in the morning. The other is situated on the side where he goes to sleep. Out of this hut a staircase of five hundred steps leads down under the ground. The sun always goes back to his starting point by an underground passage.

During the summer the days are long because the sun is an old man who walks slowly and with difficulty. It takes him a long time to make his trip. In the winter the sun is a boy who can run quickly. That is why the days are short.

When the sun makes his fire with *palo santo* wood it gets very hot on the earth. The sun is not, but he has a big fire and it is the heat from this fire which we feel on earth. In summer it is hot and the sun scorches the algarroba. When the algarroba is quite dry the sun unleashes a storm in order that the fruit may fall, then it becomes hot again for another harvest. The two harvests of the sun correspond to those of men. (Another explanation of heat is that somewhere very far away there is a big ship, like those on the Bermejo, and it is the smoke of these ships that is the heat.)

8. The Moon (Pedro)

The full moon is old, worn out and tired. Like old people, he walks slowly. When he gets very old he dies, then comes a storm. Afterwards he is born again. All men are the children of the moon. Before he dies he sends them a reminder.
[841] That is why women menstruate when the moon dies.

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The moon is a great thief. He always steals something, cows in particular. Once the men got angry and wanted to kill him. The sun said, »I don't wish you to kill my friend but if you do I will go away.» The men were afraid and they let the moon eat the cows.

The moon had sexual intercourse with a woman. That is why women menstruate. From the intercourse of the moon with that woman a boy and girl were born. They were the first people.

If a woman dreams about an old man she will find that she is menstruating when she wakens. Her soul has had intercourse with the moon who is very old and looks like an old man. Each month when a woman is about to menstruate, she dreams about that old man.

9. Sun and Moon (Pedro)

The sun and the moon are friends. The sun helps and protects the moon. If anybody wants to kill the moon, the sun says, »He is my friend, I will kill you.» The sun went off to catch lice. He found white lice and gave some of them to the moon. The moon was not satisfied with these lice and said. »I am an expert in catching lice.» He went off, but he did'nt return. The sun said, »What is the matter with the moon?» He went to look for him. He found the moon very ill. One of the lice the moon had caught had bored a big hole in his head. The sun brought a comb, dressed his hair and the moon was well again. (VIII, p. 97).[1]

10. Why the Moon is Yellow (Pedro)

The sun wanted spears. He dived into a river and changed himself into a big yellow fish (*atsa*).[2] When the Indians saw this fish they tried to kill him with spears. The back of the

[1] Roman figures refer to the notes beginning on on p. 90.

[2] A *dorado* fish.

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fish was full of spears but he could not be killed. The fish swam off with the spears in his body and distributed them among his people. The moon was not satisfied with the spears he received and he said, »I also can find spears. I am an expert in finding spears.» So the moon went to a river and changed himself into a fish. Men came and drove more than thirty spears into his body. The moon died. The men hauled him ashore, cut him into pieces and ate him. The sun said to himself, »What has happened to the moon?» He went to look for the moon and arrived in the village of the people who were eating the moon. As he watched them eating the moon, he changed himself into a dog and picked up all these bones. Unsuccessfully he tried to reform the moon but there were pieces missing, so he went back again and found the heart. One piece was still missing, it was the gallbladder. He found it at last and that is why the moon is yellow.

11. The Spots on the Moon (Pedro)

The sun wanted some ducks. He made a big net and changed himself into a duck. In this disguise he went to a lagoon where there were many ducks. He swam among the ducks and from time to time he dived under the water drawing a bird down with his net. He killed each one without being noticed by the others. He went back with many ducks which he distributed among the people of his village. He sent an old one to his friend the moon. The moon was not satisfied with this present and decided to go hunting for himself. Like the sun he made a big net and changed himself into a duck. But the ducks in the meantime had become distrustful and wanted to know who the mysterious enemy was who was bothering them. They defecated and obliged the moon to do the same. The odor of the moon's excrement is very offensive and quite different from that of the ducks. The birds recognized the moon and gathered to attack him. They scratched his body with their nails and

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claws and lacerated him in such a way that they almost pulled out his bowels. Hence on the moon's stomach one can see blue scars left by the claws of the ducks.

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12. The Constellations (Pedro)

In the sky there are two stars which are very near each other. They are called *tseʔyés* and they are said to be brothers. These brothers have a hunting dog which followed a flock of ostriches. Hearing the noise of the hunt one of the brothers went to look for the dog but could not find him. »Where is my dog?», he asked himself. »I did hear him.» The ostriches went up into the sky and the dog followed them. An ostrich feather, dyed red, fell down showing the brother where his dog was. The brother did not know what to do. The other brother came and said, »Let us go up there to get our dog, I am very fond of him.» He took his brother on his shoulders and they both ascended. First they went westward and there they were very near the dog but they did not see him as he had gone eastward following the ostriches. When they went toward the east, the dog crossed over to the south. The brothers went south at about 3 o'clock in the morning. In the summer time the brothers go out very late, but in the winter they may be seen at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

A man built a corral which became a group of stars that appear by night.

Near the Ostrich (the Constellation of the Ostriches or the Pleiades) there is a leg in the sky. The Pleiades *patseLai* are the people who formerly inhabited the earth and who now live in the heavens. They warm themselves round a log which is constantly burning in the sky. The fire runs lengthwise along the log and never goes out. If any one should touch that log it would explode. It is of *palo santo* wood and therefore burns very slowly. The ashes fall on the ground and constitute frost.

Venus is the father of all the stars.

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13. Origin of the Southern Cross and the Pleiades (Martin)

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The jaguar's daughter married the deer. She had two sons by him. One night the mother jaguar killed the deer and brought back a piece of him to her daughter. The daughter recognized her husband. The two sons of the deer broke away from the sons of the jaguar, they started to fight. The sons of the deer in revenge killed the children of the jaguar and took the meat to their grandfather to eat. Then they ran away and shouted, »Our grandfather is eating the flesh of his own children.» The jaguar jumped up to catch them, but the young ones were prepared for him. They had collected a heap of arrows. They shot an arrow into the sky It remained fast. Then they shot another one which stuck to the butt of the first and so on until a ladder had been formed which reached down to the earth. When the jaguar was about to seize them they climbed the ladder up to the sky. There they were saved. Their mother was in pain. The mother had also climbed up to the sky. The children of the deer are the Pleiades and their mother is the Southern Cross.[1]

14. The Rain

The rain is a man who has a red fringed poncho in which he wraps himself when it rains. He rides about on a mule, his head entirely covered by his poncho the fringes of which are the rain. When he lifts his poncho to see the way his eyes flash lightning. The thunder is the roll of his drum. He never stops travelling and wherever he is there is rain. Upon his departure from a place the rain ceases. The rain especially dislikes the *quebracho* tree. He dares not strike this tree lest his testicles be cut by the falling tree. His wife alone is entrusted with the destruction of these trees.

[1] Stars like crosses which appear near the Pleiades in the morning in the middle of September

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15. The Wind (Pedro)

The wind is a man riding on a bad, fast horse. This explains the rapidity with which the wind travels.

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16. The Clouds (Pedro)

The clouds are formed by the smoke from the many fires lighted on the earth. The storm clouds are the smoke of the rain.

17. The Star-women (Pedro)

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Once there was a man so ugly that no woman would marry him. One night his mother heard him speaking with a woman. The following morning she asked, »With whom were you talking last night?» She did not know that the woman was the daughter of »The two brothers»[1]. The son remained silent. The mother asked again, »Who was she?» but he still refused to answer. Every night the star-woman would leave her home in the heavens, visit her lover, and then return. She combed his hair and gave him necklaces. Finally the man became good looking. All the women fell in love with him but he would have nothing to do with them as they had despised him when he was ugly. The star-woman took him to the sky with her as her husband. He met his wife's family. One day his wife and the women of her family went to pick wild beans. Before she left the star-woman said, »Do not touch the fire, it is bad, it will burn you.» The man did not obey her, he touched the fire which exploded. He fell down dead. His wife put his head and bones in a bag and dropped it near the house of his father and mother. The bag full of bones fell with a thud. The mother seeing what was in the bag knew her son was dead so she buried his bones.

[1] Name of a constellation.

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18. The Star-woman (second version) (Martin)

There was a man who was very ugly. Nobody liked him. One night he stood where the others were playing. Looking upward he saw in the sky a pretty red star. He said, »I would like to marry her.» As soon as he had made this wish the star stood near him. The woman said, »I came because you called me.» He told her that he loved her. They were married. But after a few days they quarreled. The woman went back to the sky and the man followed her.

[821] The Morning Star is an old man who has a big fire. His fire is cold. The star-woman was the daughter of the Morning Star. In the sky it is very cold. The father of the star-

[825] woman burned his son-in-law and ate him. His soul entered an owl called *tyustáx* which says »wek, wek, wek.»

C. THE TRICKSTER

19. Origin of the Corn

Tawkxwax sowed only one gourd in his field. The armadillo went to him and asked for a seed, but *Tawkxwax* refused to give it. The armadillo then cut off the end of his own tail, which was covered with granulous scales, and stuck it in the soil. Beautiful corn stalks soon sprouted from the ground. At that time the armadillo was the only one who had corn. *Tawkxwax* had gourds, melons, sorghum, sugarcane, peanuts, oranges, bananas, but no corn. He called on the armadillo and begged for some grains of corn, but the armadillo refused because *Tawkxwax* had been stingy when he had wanted some gourd seeds. Besides he never gave anybody his new plants. *Tawkxwax* went for a walk to a forest. He got tired and sat down beside a *yuchan*[1] tree. He started to carve this tree into the shape of a horse. He changed the wood into a living animal. In the same way he made a saddle, reins and bridle. Then he set out on

[824] [1] Bombaceae, silk cotton tree. The trunk has the form of a bottle; hence the popular name of the tree, *palo borracho* (drunk wood).

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of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house.

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region.

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death.

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire.

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms.

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see.

they fight in the sky. Upon awakening a vanquished medicine-man informs his family of his defeat.

Medicine-men like to visit the Sun for he is like a peddler, he knows everything. To protect the entrance to his abode the Sun has made a slippery trail. Those who step on it slip down and break their necks. The Sun gets the dead and eats them, generally broiled or stewed. The medicine-men know how to escape this danger. They transform themselves into wax and thus stick to the trail, crossing it without running the risk of being devoured by the Sun. The Sun closes the entrance to his abode with a sort of trap. This trap consists of two beams which knock against each other and crush those who try to get between them. Medicine-men who have had no experience get crushed. Those who are skillful transform themselves into humming birds (*cinax*) and thus pass quickly between the beams before they have time to close together. Behind the beams the sun has stretched traps. The medicine-men without experience get caught by their thumbs in these traps. The Sun gets them and kills them. Great medicine-men change into eels and creep between the meshes, thus escaping.

The Sun's abode is surrounded by a palisade of cacti with only one small window. The medicine-men can fly over it if they become humming birds, or they can change into rodents (*sičúm*, a rodent with a flat head) and dig a cave under it. The Sun is very surprised when medicine-men come to him in spite of beams, traps and fences. He goes to his traps and is quite amazed when he does not find anybody in them. When this occurs he has no food. If the soul of a medicine-man is eaten by the Sun, the medicine-man who has stayed on earth dies. When a medicine-man arrives at the Sun's house, after having overcome all the obstacles, he is welcomed by the Sun, who is no longer angry, and in order for the sorcerer to come nearer, the Sun turns colder. Otherwise it would be impossible to approach within 500 yards of him because he burns everything. The Sun asks the medi-

cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

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IX. Storms

821 When a storm approaches with rain and thunder, little children's ears are to be covered each time the thunder crashes, 761 otherwise Rain would take them under his arm and carry them away to his house. When such a thing happens, the child's body, which has remained on earth, becomes lean and white and all the food he takes is of no use. He visibly pines away, and it is not likely that a medicine-man can cure him. He will finally die without the cause of his death being known. The rain cannot do anything to grown-ups or big children, for it has not the strength to carry them away, [841] but it can harm menstruating women who happen to be out during a storm. Then they get very feeble.

X. Shooting Stars

821 Shooting stars foretell the death of someone. Meteors are 787 stones thrown by the rain in order to fell the *quebracho*.

XI. Treatment of Snake Bites

752 When a serpent bites a man, it goes into the wound and 825 climbs up in his body. When a man's foot is bitten by a-snake the leg must be pressed starting from the thigh, squeezing down to the place where he has been bitten. In so doing, the snake which has already had time to enter the leg, is obliged to go down into the big toe where it rolls itself up, tired. The operation lasts from evening to dawn and when the sun appears the snake gets cramped and vanishes under the ground. Once the snake is out the medicine-man has to suck the wound, for the departing snake has left its skin inside the body of the victim. The patient is completely cured only when the last piece of skin left by the snake has been removed. Otherwise he remains sick, has a headache and gets thinner and thinner.

If the progress of the snake inside the body cannot be stopped, the animal may go up into the head and blind the victim. It also goes to the heart and after repeated bites

726 which was dry at the time. Then, moving along the left bank, they came upon the people of San Martín from the rear, cutting off their retreat. A large number of the latter, mostly women and children [727] were killed or wounded. The Yuto people carried off a child with them as a prisoner.

Divers Religious Beliefs

776 158 Among the spirits the most to be feared are the wilan who possess their victims and sink them into a state of furious madness. Thus, in the San Patricio mission a young girl all at once became pale, her eyes starting from their sockets. She fled, bolting into the wooded area, where she remained for four days. Those who followed her said that her tracks disappeared as suddenly as if the girl had flown through the air.

Another girl got up from a fainting spell during which she had been under the care of four witch doctors and said that a spirit had entered her.

Here is a case which took place in San Andrés a short time before my arrival. A Mataco had gone off to some distance from the village in search of a horse. On the way back he imagined that he saw against [15] a tree, a small luminous being, about the size of a cooking pot, which leaped from tree to tree and finally disappeared in the underbrush. Frightened, our Indian fled to the village where he fell in a faint and was shaken by violent convulsions. Doctor C. Smith had to give him a morphine injection to quiet him. The Indian got better and a few days later felt well enough to go out into the surrounding area. On the way back he had the same experience and suffered like aberrations. His parents, shaking with fright, went to get the doctor so that he might give him an injection. According to Dr. C. Smith, such hallucinations may be the result of kidney trouble, which causes the diseased person to have optical illusions, especially the apparition of luminous spots before the eyes. Certain strange and sinister sounds, also, which the Mataco Indians attribute to spirits [821] are really made by nocturnal birds. And a meteor, which fell into the Pilcomayo during my stay there was explained to me by the Matacos as the fall of an old man with gray hair.

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [824] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a supernatural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made [278] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes [824] add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranas" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

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out chunks of flesh, and can even [180] be of some slim service, similar to that which is told concerning that fellow in the "Ricciardetto." It is an ovoid, laterally flattened fish. The ray is round, vertically flattened and has three barbs on its tail. It can make a very painful and dangerous wound with the middle barb when the fish is stepped on and lashes out with its tail. Some grow to be over a meter in diameter. It lies on the bottom of quiet pools, as close as it can to the bank; it would seem to be viviparous. The yacaré, a kind of crocodile, will without warning bite the leg or arm of an unfortunate father, drag him to the bottom and there devour him.

So it is that bathing, which was so necessary to cool ourselves off in the suffocating heat, was always embittered by the presence of these maneaters.

The married woman is faithful to her husband by inclination, 837
education and fear. There are tales of terrible revenges wreaked by husbands upon their unfaithful wives, over whom they have power of life and death. While they are single they can be and often are free in their ways. It cannot be doubted that the whites attract their inter- 609
est, if matters of racial difference do not intervene, for the poorest white is always in a position to give better presents than is the richest chief.

These women love decorations and clothing, but have no use for 291
skirts or corsets. They wrap themselves from the waist down in a blanket, and hold it up with a belt or cord which is hidden behind the fold of cloth. In addition to this they know how to distribute these rags in such a way as to accentuate their good figure and yet at the same time not encumber themselves, a skill not to be expected on first seeing them. Their dress consists of robes, and when they have any they put them all on, be it winter or summer, partly because of the nomadic existence they lead and partly because they like to do so. One might say that the saying: what wards off cold also wards off heat, is particularly applicable to them.

Both men and women love bright colors (particularly red) and [822]
variety, but they also like white cloth. When they put on any garment they always do so in such a way as to leave one arm free. The women have a high regard for the kind of shirts which we wear.

The women make their own ornaments out of leather and broken 301
shells, achieving a certain elegance of form, though with a greater 291
or lesser degree of rusticity. They wear, from childhood, a sort of

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and [586] chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints [822] of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.« They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

At a wedding which is properly celebrated with all the attendant frills there are alcoholic beverages made from the pods of the algarrobo and vinal, and from forest honey -- regarding all of which I shall write in the following chapter. 273 [585]

Chapter VI

Fermented Beverages

Natural Products of Domestic Use

The algarrobo is to these parts what the chestnut tree is to Europe in its usefulness to the people who live in the region. By observation I have found that it grows in the area between one hundred and four hundred meters above sea level and between 30° and 15° of southern latitude, between the mountains and the sea. It does not like dampness, which keeps it from growing even in those places which would otherwise suit it. In dry, hot places I have come upon it even at an elevation of seven hundred meters above sea level, but always in flat country. 137

The algarrobo is found in various situations. Sometimes there are whole forests of this tree only; sometimes it grows in company with others. In my judgment it is the most widely distributed tree in the region and deserves, for this reason, and because of its great importance to have a whole area or forest zone named after it. It is to be found, in fact, growing both in forests rooted in earth built up out of the waters when these lands were raised, and in alluvial soil recently washed down.

The wood of the algarrobo is ideal for most construction purposes (except for roofing) and carpentry, but usually has the drawback of being short. There oozes from the trunk a black resin for which we have no use but the Indians do. The fruit is in the shape of a pod and contains a somewhat sweet flour which is used to make bread and fermented drinks. 137 824

There are in the region three types of algarrobo: the white kind which has pods in color and size similar to our white beans, from which a good beverage is made and the flour of which could be used. The black kind with pods like black eyed peas from which an inferior

drink is made; and the so-called [187] "patay" algarrobo whose pods, 137
like our white beans, are thick and produce a large amount of ex- 824
cellent flour with which bread -- called patay in the Quechua language --
is made. The first two have simple compound leaves, that is, each
leaf is made up of pairs of leaflets placed evenly along its axis, with
small thorns at the base of each leaf. The third type of algarrobo has
complex-compound leaves in which the secondary leaflets are sub-
divided into many pairs of almost microspoic ones, as occurs in the
churqui (Acacia cavenia), and also has thorns between ten and fifteen
centimeters long, though not large in girth.

In order to make patay (bread) which is only made in Santiago 252
and Catamarca in the basin of the Pueblos de Belen, the dry algarrobo
pod, ready for grinding, is placed under a hardwood or stone pestle
which is moved by a long lever. The pod, thus ground, is turned
into flour, but the seeds, which are extraordinarily hard, do not even
break. The flour is then sifted, poured and pressed into a pot which
has been previously heated by being put out in the sun or near a fire.
The pot is now sealed off with fine sand and then again placed in the
sun or near a fire for a short while. In ten minutes the patay is ready,
for the warming has no other object than to melt the honey contained
in the flour in order to make it coalesce into a lump, this lump be-
coming very hard once the honey cools. Thus they make loaves
weighing from four to six pounds and more, which can be packed
into saddlebags, slung over the saddle and afford a delicious if some-
what cloying food. The flour is in some ways similar to chestnut
flour. A slice of this, impaled on a knife and heated in the fire is
a really superb tidbit, both in smell and in taste. Aloja is the 273
Argentine (1) name given to the fermented beverages of that region,

1. Cacan (?) Ed.

while in Quechua they are called chicha (2), in Mataco; hŭ-nă;

2. Chicha is made from corn. Ed. --
See: Acca and Asua. [?--Translabor]

in Mocovi: nă-nă and nănn-nă; and in Vilela: tsŭc-cuĕ.

In order to make this beverage, in Perū as well as among the savage Indians, the usual thing is to chew a part of the raw-material which is then mixed in with the rest. This smaller chewed portion acts as a leavening since saliva, as we know, contains diastase, found also in the cotyledons of seeds, which converts starches into glucose or grape sugar and so makes them soluble in water and fermentable, thus producing alcohol. The Indian knows nothing about all this but being as he is a keen observer he has discovered the effect of this chewing operation, so nauseous to the whites who see it practiced.

This same process was used in China in the making of [188] bread and in the East Indies in the preparation of fermented beverages. In our own midst, who is unaware of the custom indulged in by nurses and mothers of chewing the baby's food before giving it a spoonful of it? In spite of the lack of knowledge on the part of those who do this and of its foolishness and repulsiveness in the eyes of those who see it done, this custom has a very useful end, and science puts its seal upon it.

One often sees wooden and earthenware receptacles in the Indian dwellings into which people spit the pods which they have chewed during the day. In addition to this women and children, at certain hours, set to and break and chew pods, and the small children have a great time grabbing handfuls of pods in their fat little hands, cramming them into their mouths and spitting them over and over again into the pots. Often the grownups also gather there and then the preparation of aloja is an occasion for fun. The unchewed portion is ground in a mortar, which is always made of yuchan, a tree about which I shall make some comment later. The whole lot is then passed into a mortar made of a single trunk of that same tree and water is mixed into it immediately in quantity enough to make two or three barrels of aloja at a time.

Twelve hours later the aloja is ready. It has a bitter-sweet taste and is yellowish in color. Its sharp tang makes it pleasant to the palate. I prefer it in the Chaco to any other drink, including wine itself. Taken in quantity it inebriates, but the drunkenness soon passes and leaves no hangover. At least that is the way in which I have seen it affect others.

The season for the ripening of the algarrobo pods coincides with 824 ● that of the vinal, which is not so good in quality but which can be used

in making aloja. The chañar ripens before the other two mentioned above and is a sweetish, round, rather small yellow fruit with a stone, which is eaten either raw or cooked. From this fruit arrope is made, which is good tasting and has, in local opinion, medicinal qualities for the treatment of coughs and asthma. The chañar tree, while it is young, has leaves and trunk similar to the tamarind; the branches look like those of the eucalyptus. 824

Shortly after the algarrobo pods comes the mistol which is similar to our azufaifo except for this difference: from a mixture of its fruits with algarrobo pod flower, patay is made, and kept in skins and well kneaded. Together with these fruits, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later, all the other fruits ripen -- in the Chaco in the hottest months which are October and December (spring and summer months) and further south, towards Tucumán, in November and February.

Through certain techniques of preservation the Indians are able to prolong the yearly period during which they can feed on this vegetable diet, particularly if the crop has been a good one. The harvest lasts between four and five months and is a time of carnival for the Indians [189]. 251

To preserve the algarrobo pods they build small huts which they place on four posts in order to supply them with proper ventilation and to keep them free of ants and other insects. It is a pleasure to see these little constructions rising above the Indians' huts in the same manner as do our towers. Each camp takes pleasure in having more of these little granaries than do its neighbors. In the same manner do they keep vinal and some roots and fruits which can and should be cooked when dry. 343

When the aloja is ready, which is usually at eleven in the morning, all the men gather about the yuchan container, seated in the Moorish fashion. Then, with two or three long-handled dry gourds they dip out the liquid and pass it around to each other. Meanwhile they talk about their affairs: about wars, the crops, news, odd bits of scandal, and guffaw at any strange happening or quid pro quo. Thus they continue for three, four or more hours. When the liquor is finished they fall upon the solid matter remaining. The women and children take no part in any of this. 273 [521]

They set a high value on the algarrobo pod. A famous chief, whom the whites called Granadero (Grenadier guard -- Translator) 824

because he was so tall, and the Matacos called Quiatzutaj, which means Vilelón (large Vilela Indian--Translator), because of his national origin and size, when I asked him how things were going with him replied: "Well...I...I rich...I having...much... algarrobo pods...I rich." They are miserly with these pods and with aloja, to the extent that they will not barter them except on very rare occasions. Only in a niggardly way and half heartedly will they invite anyone to share their aloja. 824 ● [556]

One morning I came upon a group of some forty Indians who were sitting around a yuchan of aloja. When I made my appearance and as soon as they recognized me they all began to shout: "John, John...yúc-cu-ás...yúc-cu-ás" (tobacco, tobacco), and I answered "hué-ni-tdé: niquiolá pac" (I have none, later I shall give you some). Only then did they invite me to drink with them and at my first refusal did not insist a second time, the chief saying to me -- "No my child...no...we...taking...you giving...tobacco." This was by way of politeness, in the Indian manner to be sure, but politeness nonetheless. I, to please them, made some effort to speak a few words to them in their own language and finally took my leave saying: "Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet...nutpinlá pac...niquioc-la yuc-cu-as..." (Goodbye, I am going home...I shall come back right away...I shall give tobacco). And all of them, full of pleasure because I spoke to them in their language and promised them tobacco shouted: "Amecná... amecná...tapil...ccaelitt (Goodbye, goodbye, come back soon). I returned after two or three hours with my pockets bursting with cut tobacco [190] and found all of them still drinking. As soon as they saw me they reminded me of my promise, which I thought they might have forgotten amidst the fumes of drunkenness. I distributed it to them and even when it was all gone they kept on asking me for more, upon which I turned my pockets inside out and shouted to them "namhuen, namhuen" (I have no more). They, satisfied with the eloquence of my demonstration, gave up their clamoring saying hée hée, which means "well, well"; but they forgot to offer me another drink of aloja. 123 574

While on the subject of greetings: these Indians have the custom of tapping the chest of their guests lightly and amicably with their half-closed fist, accompanying these caresses with expressions of good fellowship such as hée, hée, etc. -- (Good, good! etc.). 576

During the aloja revels squabbles, fights and killings are frequent, and this not only among the Indians but among the Chaco whites also. 578

A couple of words now about the yuchan, also called palo borracho (drunken tree--Translator). It is a bombaceous tree whose scientific name is Chorisia insignis, and might well be called the cotton tree. It has a strange shape which justifies its vernacular name. The trunk is shaped like an oil jar, that is, narrow at its base, wide in the middle and narrow once more at the point where the crown forks. The trunk grows to a diameter of two meters and is covered with spiked bumps. At most it reaches a height of four or five meters and is often accompanied by a shoot growing at its base. The crown is at first made up of only two branches which later subdivide and form a wide crown of some eight, ten or more meters in diameter. The leaves are similar to those of the walnut but a little smaller and provide good shade. 137

From the bark, strips are cut which are used for tying bundles, as roofing material, to wrap and tie bunches of tobacco leaves and for any similar use. The Indians make their canoes from the trunk, all of a piece. In order to do this all they do is hollow it out with any old tool, since the wood is soft and easily worked when newly cut but later becomes harder than cork although spongy like it when dry. The Matacos use the name cuóu quiác for canoe, which in their tongue means "duck." 824● [283] [396]

But the thing which is especially interesting about the yuchan is its fruit, which in size and shape is like a lemon. When it is ripe, which usually occurs between November and January, according to its location, the lemons split into four lobes and there appears a plume-like puff of cotton, white as snow, which little by little is carried away by the wind. 137

One of these open lemons is about the size of a fist, and each tree produces hundreds of them each year.

The Indians make a limited use of this cotton, but the whites do not, although I have seen in Catamarca, where the number of these trees is small, white cloth made from this material which won prizes at the Córdoba exhibition.

In the Chaco there is an immense number of yuchans which grow mixed in with other hard-wood trees. If this cotton could be

dye themselves red when they are courting, black when they wish 302
to appear dreadful, and green when celebrating some festivity.
These colors come off very easily.

While on the subject of personal adornment, I must say that 304
these Indians, to a greater or lesser degree, are in the habit of 824
tattooing themselves. I have seen this carried to great lengths
among some Toba warriors, and especially among the women. It
looks something like the scars left by smallpox and is set out in
geometric designs. They do it by puncturing the skin with a [216]
large thorn coated with a caustic substance which looks like milk
and which leaves an indelible mark and remains under the
epidermis. This substance is to be found mainly in Bolivia in the
region of Santa Cruz, and is called in Guarani iguoqui. The same
name is given to the plant from which it comes which is a vine
which produces bunches of white flowers and elongated fruit
which break open and expel a sort of dust. In order to obtain
iguoqui they cut the bunches before they ripen, and from the stalk
there exudes the milky sap used for tattooing. While the opera-
tion is in process they keep the portion of stalk submerged in water
so that its milky contents will not well out and be lost. A Chiri-
guano Indian saw one of these vines twenty leagues downstream
from the frontier with the whites on the Bermejo River in the
place called La Luna Nueva.

A custom very similar in nature to tattooing in its object 302
is the plucking of hair which is a universal activity among the
inhabitants of the Chaco and possibly among all the Indians of the
New World.

The object of this is to appear better looking, but it is
possible that the real cause has something to do with hygiene
and comfort.

Maybe they want to set themselves off in this way from the
other animals, which are covered with hair.

Meanwhile, either because they are naturally so or because
of a gradual natural selection based on their depilatory habit, [142]
the fact is that the Indians are almost completely lacking in hair
both on the body and face, and the little which does grow they
pull out, with very few exceptions.

In spite of their language's being so complete I have been 533
unable to discover canticles or any similar musical effort. All

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter XIII.

Belief in „good spirits".

776 I have so far mainly spoken of such spirits of the Chaco Indians as are regarded as essentially evilly disposed to mankind, being looked upon as the authors of sickness and misfortune. But the religion of these Indians is by no means only a pure demonology. They also assume the existence of »good spirits« and these from a certain point of view are of the greatest interest. The Chaco Indians especially speak of their good spirits with reference to the guardian spirits of the medicine-men and the spirits animating certain plants. With the former I shall deal presently. For the moment a few words may be said of the spirits which are 776 believed to animate the *plants*. Of course, there are also evil or harmful plant spirits. The character of the spirit animating a tree or plant is ● 824 naturally first of all determined according to the useful or harmful properties of that tree or plant. Thus plants producing poisonous fruits harmful to man, are animated by evil spirits, since the effects are always ascribed to the indwelling spirit, the »soul« of the plant. Likewise, in [754] the cactus thorns, of which malignant sorcerers avail themselves in throwing spells, are animated by evil *möhsek*, *aittáh*, *peyák*, according to the names different tribes give these demons. Still the Chaco Indians pay special attention to the spirits of such trees or plants as produce edible or otherwise useful fruit, which in a country like Chaco are of essential importance to the inhabitants.

776 Among trees which from an alimental point of view are of great import-
824 ance to the Chaco Indians I have mentioned the algaroba, the chañar,
262 and the tusca, the fruits of which ripen in the months October to February. It is particularly these trees which are said to be animated by »good spirits« who control their growth and cause their fruits to ripen.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noín* or *nõtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aitták slahsa is*, the Choroti *möhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aitták* or *möhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nõtta* (= *noin'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noin*.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

18. The Star-woman (second version) (Martin)

There was a man who was very ugly. Nobody liked him. One night he stood where the others were playing. Looking upward he saw in the sky a pretty red star. He said, »I would like to marry her.» As soon as he had made this wish the star stood near him. The woman said, »I came because you called me.» He told her that he loved her. They were married. But after a few days they quarreled. The woman went back to the sky and the man followed her. The Morning Star is an old man who has a big fire. His fire is cold. The star-woman was the daughter of the Morning Star. In the sky it is very cold. The father of the star-woman burned his son-in-law and ate him. His soul entered an owl called *tyustáx* which says »wek, wek, wek.»

C. THE TRICKSTER

19. Origin of the Corn

Tawkxwax sowed only one gourd in his field. The armadillo went to him and asked for a seed, but *Tawkxwax* refused to give it. The armadillo then cut off the end of his own tail, which was covered with granulous scales, and stuck it in the soil. Beautiful corn stalks soon sprouted from the ground. At that time the armadillo was the only one who had corn. *Tawkxwax* had gourds, melons, sorghum, sugar-cane, peanuts, oranges, bananas, but no corn. He called on the armadillo and begged for some grains of corn, but the armadillo refused because *Tawkxwax* had been stingy when he had wanted some gourd seeds. Besides he never gave anybody his new plants. *Tawkxwax* went for a walk to a forest. He got tired and sat down beside a *yuchan*[1] tree. He started to carve this tree into the shape of a horse. He changed the wood into a living animal. In the same way he made a saddle, reins and bridle. Then he set out on

[1] Bombaceae, silk cotton tree. The trunk has the form of a bottle; hence the popular name of the tree, *palo borracho* (drunk wood).

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

horseback. The people did not know what a horse was as they had never seen one. *Tawkxwax* was hungry so he went to the armadillo's house. There he succeeded in trading his horse for corn. With the corn in his possession, he called all the men together and distributed corn among them. He taught them how to cultivate it. The people at first were afraid. Many thought the plant was poisonous. Others said it was very good food. Finally all were convinced and from that day on people have always had something to eat. Mankind is indebted to *Tawkxwax* for food.

A man who heard of *Tawkxwax's* horse went to the forest in order to carve one for himself. He carved the *yuchan* so awkwardly that he made a tapir. Thus also did men make mules and donkeys.

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Tawkxwax climbed a *yuchan* and fell down head first. As he fell the thorns of the tree tore his body. He removed his stomach from his body and buried it. From it grew a plant (*iletsáx*) the root of which is very large and full of water. His intestines became lianas. Like a cow *Tawkxwax* had two stomachs. With the second he made a plant called *iwokanó*.

21. The Origin of Serpents (Pedro)

In ancient times there were no serpents. One day *Tawkxwax* found a thick rope. He picked it up but threw it away later on. After a while, thinking it might be useful, he went back to get it. He looked and looked but he could not find the rope. At last he found a serpent and thought that perhaps it might be the rope he wanted. A serpent is therefore called *niyǫ́k* or rope. *Tawkxwax* wanted see whether this new animal he found could bite so he began to tease it. The serpent did not bite him. He held fire to the mouth of the serpent until it bit him severely. The first serpent he made poisonous was the *yarara* (*hatenekwę́mę*). When the other

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serpents heard of this they went to *Tawkxwax* and wanted him to heat their mouths too. *Tawkxwax* heated the mouths of the *lančitąx, katitsul* (rattlesnake of the bush) and the coral *čalaxčetáx* The *aguara* (*iwalęk*) remained a very harmless serpent as he was afraid and ran away when *Tawkxwax* began to heat his mouth. The serpents which did not come to *Tawkxwax* to have their mouths heated are not dangerous at all (XI, p. 98).

22. Why There Are Poisonous Serpents (Pedro)

Formerly serpents were harmless and they would have remained so had it not been for *Tawkxwax*. He is a fool, a trickster. He got the silly idea of taking a live serpent and heating its mouth. From time to time he let it bite him in order to see the results of his burning. He would not stop until the fangs of the serpent were full of poison. Then the serpent bit him and *Tawkxwax* became very ill. Since then serpents have been dangerous.

23. Origin of the Sting-ray (Pedro)

One day as *Tawkxwax* was walking by the side of a lagoon he found a piece of leather. He picked it up, looked at it and threw it into the water. Shortly afterwards he decided he wanted the piece of leather but could not find it. He put his hands in the water to feel for it and was stung. He saw that he had been stung by a sting-ray and realized that the piece of leather had changed into a sting-ray.

24. Why the Mistol Trees Walk No More (Pedro)

X 539 X 773

In days gone by mistol[1] trees could walk. They could be driven along by people shouting or making a noise to frighten them. They would hop and fly just like grass-

[8247]

[1] Mistol (*Zizyphus Mistol*) is very useful to the Matako. They eat its fruits and with its ashes they make alkali which they chew together with coca leaves.

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLǫt*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hap?ap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

of their dreams. My informant, having dreamed that he was planting sugar-cane, intended to grow some.

Through the soul one knows what is going to happen. For instance, if one dreams that he shall be killed, it is likely that he is to die an unnatural death. If he is traveling about and dreams of home it is better to turn back. A man who is away from his wife can talk to her in the evening and she will see him in her dreams. It is the soul which walks about during the night. If one dreams of an algarroba or that he is working in a field, it means that he has still a long time to live. If during the absence of a member of the group someone dies, the absent one will dream about the dead person who appears to him naked. Generally when a traveler returns to his village there is no need to tell him of what has happened during his absence, for he is informed of everything through his dreams which occur when his soul returns to his family. Very often in dreams one sees dead relatives. The soul has gone to the underworld and paid them a visit. Sometimes the dead return by night to the houses of the living who then dream of the departed.

b) *Remedies*

The Indians call a certain fungus *ãxọ̀tĕut*. According to them it is the excrement of the fox which towards morning transforms itself into a fungus. It is used as a remedy for scalding. A fragment of the plant is toasted, powdered, mixed with fat and the white of an egg and spread on the burned place. The fat and the egg white are desirable but not indispensable ingredients for in a pinch the toasted powder is sufficient. This same plant sometimes obturates the penis of a sick person and prevents him from urinating. If when sucking the sick man the medicine-man gets out a fragment of this plant it most certainly means that the patient will recover. When the extremity of a limb aches it is to be tied at intervals of about half an

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [821] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a supernatural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made [278] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes [824] add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranas" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

000 estos indios que están acosados por una situación económica de día en día más difícil y que fuera de las misiones están sometidos a múltiples vejámenes y humillaciones. No obstante no se han observado crisis de suicidio entre los demás indios del Chaco argentino que viven bajo condiciones igualmente desfavorables. Hay también indicios de que los casos de suicidio eran comunes al principio de la era de las misiones y esto puede hacernos suponer que el suicidio era la expresión tradicional de la agresión en contra de los miembros de su grupo contra los cuales el individuo no podía vengarse en otra forma. El ejemplo dado por un suicida se hace contagioso y de allí nacen epidemias esporádicas de envenenamiento.

768 The high rate of suicide among the Matako Indians of the Argentine Gran Chaco is a social phenomenon well worth our attention. In this tribe suicide at times assumes the character of an epidemic that causes havoc among the people and is a serious problem for the [197] English missionaries who have several stations along the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. To these missionaries, especially to Dr. Collins [115] Smith and J. White, I am indebted for most of my information on the suicidal mania that has flared up on several occasions during the past ten years. Personally, I have witnessed only one case. Information about suicide among the Matako who live in the bush or as miserable hilotes around the white settlements is not available, but there is little doubt that if the Matako in the missions are so prone to take their lives, those who find themselves exposed to hunger and mistreatment will be even more inclined to end their days wilfully.

Suicide among the Matako takes a strictly patternized form. In all cases known to me, the victims poisoned themselves by eating the [824] fruits of the sachasandia (Capparis salicifolia Griseb). This fruit, the size of a walnut, grows on a tree which is very common in the Chaco region between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers. It ripens in December, the period which coincides with the largest number of 262 suicides. Strangely enough, the sachasandia is also an important food for the chaco Indians; it is collected in the summer, dried in 251 the sun and stored in caraguata bags to be consumed during the lean winter months. Even dried these fruits are extremely poisonous and 252 before eating them the Indians boil them six or seven times in different waters.

762 The clinical symptoms of sachasandia poisoning are: convulsions, 164 foaming at the mouth and, finally, coma. The heart beat becomes jerky with short stops and upsurges of activity. The muscles of the throat are affected with paralysis and the patient makes a gurgling sound. When paralysis sets in, no emitic can be taken orally. The last phase of the agony is characterized by jumpy motions of the body

Ee 838 171 c Ce [113]

/224 cont./

According to Westermarck (2), homosexuality is very

2. Westermarck: Ursprung und Entwickelung der Moralbegriffe /Origin and Development of Ideas of Morality/. Vol. II. Leipzig, 1909.

widespread among the Indians of America. The conception that this is a disgrace is by no means as marked everywhere as it is among the Indians mentioned here.

Ee Ce 839 171 c Ce 833 171 [839]

/225/ Among the Chané and Chiriguano I did not hear anything about onanism. Among the Choroti, on the other hand, it is said to be practiced by the men who are ignored by the women at a dance.

Perversions in the relationship between men and women, which were common in ancient Peru, do not seem to occur here. The primitive mammal position in coitus is said to be common among the Chaco tribes.

M 832 ●824 Ee 825 773 839

Mataco gave me a root which they used as an aphrodisiac.

The relationship between human beings and animals is so intimately intertwined in the legends of the Indians that one cannot always determine whether they mean the one or the other. The legends that describe love affairs between human beings and animals are not descriptions of bestiality, which seems to be unknown among these Indians.

Ee 834 171

The sense of modesty has developed very differently among these peoples. It seems to me to depend very much on the mode of dress. None of these Indian men or women of whom I have spoken here regards it as improper, insofar as they have not been completely corrupted or civilized, to expose the upper part of the body. The Chiriguano and Chané women are much more ashamed than the Choroti and Ashluslay when they expose the sexual parts. The latter were very reluctant to undress completely in order to be photographed. I did not even dare propose such a thing to the former.

Ee [126]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

must then be on the alert and have his horses and mules well secured. 136
The settlers generally hunt the jaguar by means of hounds, of which of course a great number must be used. Badly attacked by its assailants, the beast at last seeks refuge in climbing a tree, where it is generally easily shot.

The natives stand in great fear of the jaguar, looking upon it as the 125
incarnation of an evil spirit, and the beast does in fact seem to have far less respect for the Indian than for a white man. In the religion and mythology of the Chaco Indians the jaguar plays an important part.

The puma is rare, and the same may be said of the maned wolf (*Canis* 136
jubatus) which is reported to exist in the Chaco, for I never saw or heard of any. The fox is very common on the plains, and its howling or barking is one of the characteristic sounds interrupting the silence of night. Of birds there is no great variety in the Chaco. Doves, wild turkeys, and small parrots are, in addition to ostriches, the birds most commonly seen in the pampas regions and forests. Only at the big lagoons, found here and there in the interior of the country, may one notice a rich bird-life, especially during the dry season. Ducks of different kinds, white and yellow herons, storks, and other aquatic birds in countless numbers give life to these places, whither also many animals of the forest descend to allay their thirst.

Venomous snakes, even rattlesnakes, are quite common on the plains, especially during the dry season. Both in the river Pilcomayo and in the lagoons alligators are found, although in the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco they are not as numerous as in the Rio Paraguay. The rivers moreover abound in fish, and all the Pilcomayo tribes live mainly by fishing.

Insect-life is very rich in summer-time. Different kinds of mosquitoes, crickets, large beetles, and especially the *Cicada* with its shrill whistling, shortly before sunset and at night fill the air with their weird sounds, innumerable croaking frogs joining in the concert. These manifestations of lower animal life, as they are perceived at sunset, are, I believe, the things that most impress a traveller in the Chaco.

Although mosquitoes are numerous and troublesome in the summer, the climate is on the whole healthy. Malarial fever does not occur, except [164]
when it is occasionally introduced by settlers or other white men. Rheumatism and catarrhs are the ailments from which the natives most commonly suffer.

The scarcity of water has been the greatest obstacle to the explora- 133
tion of the Chaco. In the Bolivian Chaco the traveller preferably keeps to

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

18. The Star-woman (second version) (Martin)

There was a man who was very ugly. Nobody liked him. One night he stood where the others were playing. Looking upward he saw in the sky a pretty red star. He said, »I would like to marry her.» As soon as he had made this wish the star stood near him. The woman said, »I came because you called me.» He told her that he loved her. They were married. But after a few days they quarreled. The woman went back to the sky and the man followed her.

The Morning Star is an old man who has a big fire. His fire is cold. The star-woman was the daughter of the Morning Star. In the sky it is very cold. The father of the star-woman burned his son-in-law and ate him. His soul entered an owl called *tyustáx* which says »wek, wek, wek.»

C. THE TRICKSTER

19. Origin of the Corn

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A man who heard of *Tawkxwax's* horse went to the forest in order to carve one for himself. He carved the *yuchan* so awkwardly that he made a tapir. Thus also did men make mules and donkeys.

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21. The Origin of Serpents (Pedro)

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22. Why There Are Poisonous Serpents (Pedro)

Formerly serpents were harmless and they would have remained so had it not been for *Tawkxwax*. He is a fool, a trickster. He got the silly idea of taking a live serpent and heating its mouth. From time to time he let it bite him in order to see the results of his burning. He would not stop until the fangs of the serpent were full of poison. Then the serpent bit him and *Tawkxwax* became very ill. Since then serpents have been dangerous.

23. Origin of the Sting-ray (Pedro)

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24. Why the Mistol Trees Walk No More (Pedro)

X 539 X 773

In days gone by mistol[1] trees could walk. They could be driven along by people shouting or making a noise to frighten them. They would hop and fly just like grass-

[824]

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3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

told his murderers that they had killed him, but that he would revenge himself by killing them too. He took some of the blood which ran from his wound and threw it at them. The blood changed into disease and from that day on men have been killed by disease. Before that time disease did not exist. (XIII).

56. The Welán-Woman (Pedro)[1]

A woman was heard crying one night and when the men asked her what the trouble was she said that they had killed her son and that she was going to eat their sons. At midnight she left her house and caught and ate a child. She did this many times. When the parents of the children kept awake to protect them the *welán*-woman made herself invisible. Finally they could stand it no longer and decided to kill the woman. They killed her but because she was a *welán* she came to life again and went right on killing and eating children. The men realized she could not be killed permanently so they decided to look for another shelter. They hollowed out a *yuchan* and entered it but it was very hot and they were obliged to leave. They slept in the open and the woman ate many children. From there the *welán*-woman proceeded to another village, Pozo del Tigre, and started eating children there. The men of Pozo del Tigre proved more astute. They killed the *welán*-woman and then they started a big fire and burned her. When she was in the fire the embers craeked up and jumped in all directions. Those which fell in the forest changed into jaguars domestic cats, pumas, tapirs and snakes. Those which fell into the water became rayfish, *surubi*, *piranya*, *bagres*, *pacu* and other water animals.

57. The Spirits (Pedro)

The spirits, that haunt the imagination of the Matako, are called *ho?nat-Lele* (dwellers of the ground) or *honatsi-Lele*

[1] This tale is the sequel of the preceding.

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very cruel and the men of ancient times did not know where to flee. They tried to dig out the *yuchan*, but *Asus* cut off their heads and they are still enclosed in the *yuchan* where they are spirits. *Asus* hangs the heads of the women close to the hollow *yuchan* in which he lives. He never goes out during the day, only at night. Men must be very careful not to sleep in the open, otherwise the bat will cut their heads off.

F. ORIGIN OF WOMEN, FIRE, MYTHICAL CHARACTERS

64. The Creation of Women (Martin)

The first men lived by themselves, they had no women. They had only a mother, a very old woman who had her house some distance from theirs. Every day the men went to hunt birds and deer. They ate the meat in the forest but saved the blood to give to their mother. The old woman said to herself, »What will these men do alone?» She made some small pots and put in them the blood her sons had given her. Her sons wondered why she was so secretive and never joined them, but every day they gave her more blood which she stored in her little pots.

During the night one year later the men heard children's voices coming from their mother's house. The men said, »How can this old woman make children». They watched and in the morning they saw five girls. The old woman had produced them from the blood of the deer which she placed in the pots she had made. The old woman is a falcon, called by us *tale.*

65. The First Women (Martin)

The first people were animals who could speak. They lived by themselves without women. They fished every day and their storehouses were filled with fish. One day they found that some one had stolen everything they had stored. They decided that the best thing to do was to leave a guard to

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keep watch. They left a parrot. The bird climbed a tree and the others said, »When the thieves come, you must screech and we will run back.»

Shortly after the animals had left, the parrot heard voices coming from the sky. He looked up and saw women climbing down on a rope. They took everything they could eat. Then they slept under the tree in which the parrot was hiding. The bird instead of doing what he was told dropped small twigs on the women. At last the women awakened and said, »Who is in the tree, maybe they are ants, or perhaps it is a parrot.» They started to look and finally discovered the parrot hidden among the foliage. They picked up the seeds of a tree (*árbol del sapo*) and they threw them at the parrot. One of the seeds struck the parrot on his tongue and from that time on the parrot has had a black tongue. It seems that while the parrot was on watch the iguana heard the noise made by the women and he warned his friends but they would not pay any attention to him as the iguana was believed to be deaf. The descent of the women took place while the iguana was eating, just after he had come back from the forest with firewood.

In the evening the other people came home. They said, »Where is the parrot?» The parrot was mute, all he could do was make gestures and point to the sky. They looked at his tongue and found it black.

The next morning the *aipés*[1] (or *akpés*) was left to guard the food. At first the women were afraid, then they caught him and pulled out his tongue which they replaced with a fruit seed of the *árbol del sapo*. The lizard remained mute like the parrot. At night when the people found him they were very surprised to find that he was speechless. They held a council to determine who should guard the camp that night. They chose a hawk[2] for a sentry. The women climbed down

[1] Lizard very much like the *ututo* lizard. It lives on trees.

[2] A kind of black hawk. It eats serpents and rodents. The Matako call it *čalená*.

X 539 X 773 up to their fields and tried to catch the women. They buried themselves in the ground in an effort to escape, but the armadillo said he would dig them out. He dug out one after another. The men took them. The same thing happened each time he pulled a woman out of the ground. In the end, angry because he could not keep a wife for himself, he put out the eye of a woman and made her so ugly that no one wanted her. From that time on men have had women.

X 539 X 773 826 The wild women had toothed vulvas. A bird saw then eating corn with their vulvas. He warned the people, but *Tawkxwax*, the Trickster, would not believe him and slept with one of the women, who cut his penis. *Tawkxwax* took a bone and put it in place of his lost organ. He then went in pursuit of the woman and found her just as she was crouching to light a fire. He threw a stone between her legs and broke the teeth of her vagina. From that time on men have had sexual intercourse with women without being mutilated.

67. The Stealing of the Fire (Pedro)

X 539 X 77. 372 In olden times the jaguar was the sole owner of fire. He would give some of it away only if presents were given him in return. The people would take fish to him and in exchange the jaguar gave them fire with which to cook. Once a rat with a flattened head, the *sičúm*, tried to steal some fire. He dug his way into the earth until he was underneath the hearth of the jaguar. The jaguar had been watching his fire and he saw the rat just as he was about to take an ember. He struck the rat on the head and that is why it is flat now. Another rat succeeded in stealing an ember. This rat has a black spot on his neck. He was lucky enough to get close to the fire without being seen. He picked up an ember and ran off holding it against his neck. He still has a burnt spot there, the mark of the fire. Using the inside of a cactus as tinder he lighted a big fire and then he distributed it. That is why all men have fire.

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68. The Stealing of the Fire (second version) (Martin)

At the time when there were just animals, the jaguar was the only one to have fire. He bad a big hearth. A little rodent, the *wiyés*, passed by. Whenever the jaguar turned his head the rabbit would put some embers aside. The jaguar saw that he was touching the embers so he said, »Don't touch the fire, you will burn yourself.» The little animal pretended that he was cold and was shivering. He picked an ember up and put it under his chin. He said to the jaguar, »I go, I feel warm». He ran away and threw the ember into the middle of a meadow. All the world began to burn. The jaguar went to put the fire out, but he could not. In this way the people of the world got fire.

Now the jaguar had no fire. He decided to take it away from man. He went to their village and sent a woman with a jar full of water to put out the fire. The woman emptied the jar, but could not put out the fire. She and the jaguar got their soles badly burnt. Hence the soles of a jaguar's paws are dark.

The jaguar went back to his den very ill. He remained there a long time in such condition. As no one came to bring him fish in exchange for fire and as he did not know how to hunt, he suffered greatly from hunger. He spent days and nights in his hut on an empty stomach and he was very miserable. One day a little tiger cat (*silak'ai*) called on him. This animal was an expert in hunting and he decided to teach the jaguar how to catch food. The tiger cat leaped on animals, killed them and brought his victims to the jaguar. The first victim of the tiger cat was an *aguara*, (*potsax*) a very large bird which eats crabs. The cat jumped on the *aguara* but was not able to kill him outright. The bird flew into the sky and it was not until they were 300 feet above the ground that the cat killed him. They dropped to earth but the cat was not injured. He took the bird to the jaguar. Within ten days the jaguar learned to hunt by himself. He killed

X 539 a little bow with arrows and asked all the men of the country
X 773 to present it to the child. The man from whom the child would accept the bow would be his father. More than a hundred men gathered to present the bow to the child but he would take it from no one. At last the *chuña* appeared and the child took the bow from him without hesitating. When the people of the village discovered that the *chuña* was the father of the child they got angry and wanted to kill him, but the *chuña* married the woman.

X 539 As soon as the child recognized his father, the people
X 773 rushed toward the bird to kill him. He did not know how to defend himself, but his wife gave him a sling and with this he
● 825 defeated his enemies. During the fight he threw a stone which struck the neck of the *potsax*. This bird was so badly hurt that the blood spurted out of the wound and after it dried the neck of the bird had turned black and it had remained so ever since. The *Lokotax* bird was struck by a stone which tore off his scalp and to this day he is bald. The yulo (*wutnax*) was struck in the eyes and now his eyes are circled by a red band. The *istiwintáx* bird was hit on the nose and his nose has remained swollen and red. The *tok* bird was wounded in the breast. The woodpecker was hurt on the head. Although the *chuña* was the victor of the battle a bird (*nęčę*), very like the *chuña*, succeeded in making his nose bleed and that is why the *chuña's* beak is red.

73. The Magic Pregnancy (third version) (Martin)

X 539 In ancient times there were many people and in one tribe
X 773 there was a twenty year old woman who had never been with a man. One day her father and mother noticed she was pregnant. She had left the house to get some water and on her way had found something ressembling a small white ball. She picked it up and sucked it like a piece of sugar and from this she became pregnant. When the child was born it was not known who its father was. All the men wanted to marry the girl but she did not care for any

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what had happened to his brother. She told him and the boy decided to try to rescue him. He arrived at the old woman's house but sat down with great care. He grabbed hold of the old woman and started to beat her, asking for his brother. The brother was freed and he told about the other people being held captive. They beat the old woman until she set them all free. The people rescued the brothers appointed them *caciques* (XVII) and went home with them. Upon reaching home the elder brother's wife wanted to become the younger brother's wife as well, but he would not hear of it as he was afraid of his elder brother.

G. THE ANIMALS

All animals are still men, their souls are men and live as such with habits corresponding to those of the animals they represent. The Matako understand the language of the *yučandon* (aquatic bird) which warns them whenever an enemy has come to attack.

The *kiličuk* owl sleeps all day and gets up only at 8 o'clock in the evening. Then he goes to the river where he catches *wáhat* (*sabalo*). He is a very good fisherman and at midnight takes the first catch to his wife. She prepares a part of it to be eaten immediately and saves the rest for another meal. After giving his wife his first catch he returns to the pool and fishes until dawn, then he goes home to sleep.

The jaguar always talks with a medicine-man, assuring him that he is his friend. He has a soul the same as men. He calls the Matako *etekičalax* (black heads) and says that their flesh tastes good.

77. The Ray

One day while passing a lagoon a man heard a noise under the water. He dove into the water and saw people building a big house. The ray (*poxwin*) was the master carpenter and taught him how to make such a house. The ray had many houses, bright and furnished with everything. He had a

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store also with maté and many clothes. The Matako houses are in the form of a ray because they learned from the ray how to build them:

78. The Spider

In ancient times the spider was a woman who taught weaving to a Matako girl. When she knew how to weave, the Spider, who was still a woman, changed into an animal. The Matako learnt from the girl how to weave their ponchos and belts.

79. Why the Indians are Dark

A green frog (*hanatáx*) came out of the water to change its skin. It met an Indian and suggested that they exchange skins. The Indian was distrustful of the frog and would not accept his offer. Some other Indians came along and changed skins with the frog and they became white. Their skins were as white as the skin of a German and were so because they had trusted the frog. The first Indian and his friends were afraid to change their skins with the frog and so they have remained dark.

80. The Origin of the Otter

A boy went to take a bath in a river. He refused to get out of the water and go home. He was changed into an otter because he stayed in the water too long.

81. The Origin of the Ant-bear

An old woman was picking berries in the bush. She refused to go home and was changed into an ant-bear (*sulax*).

82. The Origin of the Jaguar

A man went fishing with his wife. He climbed a tree to catch parrots. He threw the parrots down to his wife who was on the ground. From the top of the tree he saw her

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eating the parrots he had thrown down. He said, »Why are you eating the parrots?» He climbed down the tree and went up to her but she broke his neck with her teeth. When she went back to her house her children rushed up to her to see what she was bringing home. She was carrying her husbands' head. The children said, »Why do you bring the head of our father?» She answered, »This is not the head of your father, it is an armadillo's head.» During the night she ate her children and then ran away, to the bush and did not come back. She changed herself into a jaguar. Jaguars are women.'

83. The Eel

A man passed a lagoon and saw a dog coming out of the water. It was a female dog whose teats were full of milk. The animal was very bad and the man, who was afraid, ran away. The dog caught him and bit him. The man was changed into an eel (*iʔñá*).

84. The Origin of Wild Pigs

Some women went to gather *caraguatá* to make bags. In the evening they did not return. The following morning the men went out to search for them. They found only wild pigs *nitsáx* into which the women had been changed.

85. The Larva of the Pini Bee

Formerly the larva of the *pini* wasp was a man. He was stout and fat and his nose was dark.

86. The Palometa Fish[1] (Pedro)

Once upon a time the palometa fish (*nixwúk*) was a man and he had a cow and a donkey. One day he decided to find the source of all water. He killed his cow, dried the flesh and loading the donkey with the dried meat went in

[1] Palometa (*Serrosalmo piranha*). Voracious fish.

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search of the source of water. After a while he arrived at a swampy place where he and his donkey sank into the mud and died. The man was changed into a palometa fish.

87. The Woman and the Dogs (Pedro)

Formerly there was a woman who lived by herself and went hunting with her dog as a companion. One day the people of her village noticed that she was pregnant and as she was not married they wondered if she had taken her dog as a husband. She gave birth to a dog. After a while she had another baby dog and people knew that the dog was her husband. Instead of killing her dogs she suckled and raised them as though they were real children. After they were grown their mother took them to hunt and showed them which animals to catch. The dogs could not speak but they understood perfectly what their mother said. She told them to leave the spotted animal, the tiger, alone. They must not approach the peccaries, nor the majal, (the two species of Dicotyles) for they were very dangerous. They could kill deer but if they happened to meet a puma they were not to follow him to the trees, but wait for the hunters. She also told them that when they followed an armadillo they had better not bite his nose or he would curl himself into a ball. Neither were they to attack the *aguara guasu* (Canis Azarae) nor the tapir. Care was necessary when attacking an ant-eater and a certain kind of coati. With the tiger-cats they were to take the same precautions as those taken with the puma and not follow it. It they should meet with a fox, who was very much like themselves they might fight him but if after a little while they found him to be stronger, they must grab him by the throat. They could kill with impunity all kinds of armadillos, turtles and a variety of small fox. They were to be cautious regarding deer. Females could be attacked but the males with horns were very dangerous. They were to be careful with the iguanas as

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their bites were dangerous to dogs. Snakes should not be attacked.

One day the woman sent her children hunting. They killed a tapir. When they returned they were hungry so their mother skinned the tapir and fed them the meat, as she took good care of them.

As her sons were excellent hunters a man came to the woman and asked her if she would let them accompany him on a hunt. The woman was very fond of her children and as she knew hunting was dangerous, she sent her nephew along with them. The nephew was old and experienced. Time passed and the dogs did not return. Finally one of them appeared and when the woman asked him where his brother was he did not answer, saying only »is, is, is.» (»All right»).

He told his mother that the jaguar had killed his brother for the fun of it, he had not eaten him. Some men killed the jaguar and gave the woman its flesh which she ate. She made a *pimpim* (drum) and she sang for two years. After two years she had ceased thinking of her son, but she always accompanied her dogs on the hunt for fear they would be killed.

88. The Woman and the Dogs (second version)

Once there was a woman and a dog and they used to go hunting together. The woman became pregnant and the people said that the dog had made her so. The people were thinking, »She is pregnant and she is not married. Only the dog with whom she goes around could have made her pregnant.» She gave birth to a dog. The second one was a dog and so was the third. Then the people said that it was true that she had intercourse with the big dog. The woman always spoke to the dogs, but they could not answer. When she spoke to them they could understand her. They say that when the dogs wanted to speak they said, »is, is, is, is». That was the language of the dogs. Whenever the woman

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told them to come and drink water they would do so. If the woman said, »Go and lie in the shade», the dogs went to lie in the shade. If she said, »Come and have some water», they came and drank. Whenever the woman would say, »Go with so and so,» they went with him, but when the woman said, »Let us go hunting», if they did not want to go they just lay where they were. If she said, »Let us go hunting,» they stood up, but one always stayed at home. Only two went to hunt.

The woman did not kill them, she gave them her breast and they slept there. She stretched on the ground and the pups sucked. When they were full she got up.

People always asked her for dogs which could hunt. The woman said. »My sons, if you do not want to go send one of your brothers to go with this man. If you come across a dangerous animal do not go near him and take care to retreat a little. The wild pigs are bad. You will recognize the jaguars by their spots, they are very bad. If you see an armadillo, be prudent, if you bite his shell it will pinch your nose. Do not be afraid of ostriches they are safe. If you hunt a wild boar (Spanish *chancho majal*) you must know that it is dangerous. Do not go near it. When you are after a jaguar, do not climb the tree that it is on, wait for people, for they will follow you and will come soon. When the people arrive they will kill the jaguar, it will fall, it will die.»

The people came back after having killed a jaguar. They gave the skin to the woman. She said, »It is fine. With this skin I will make a litter for my children.» The people also brought meat to her whenever they went hunting with the dogs. They distributed the flesh to her in order that the dogs might eat abundantly.

One day another man came. He said, »Aunt, I came here in order to see if you would lend me your dogs so I might go and hunt.» That evening the people came back. The woman said, »It looks as if my sons had hunted animals.

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they are full.» »My sons, here is water if you want to drink, drink and then go to sleep.»

Another man came and asked for the dogs. He took all three. That evening two dogs came back to their mother, one was missing. The mother said, »It looks as if something has happened to one of my sons, he did not come back with his brothers.» The people were arriving and one said to the mother, »The jaguar killed your son. The jaguar was in a thicket and it ran after the dog. The dog escaped but the bush was so high that he could not pass through and he was seized by the jaguar and killed.» People gathered before the woman's house and said, »Aunt, people are coming with the body of your son.» They buried the dog. The mother wept, »What a pity, I loved you so much.». The woman was always thinking of what had happened and she refused to give her other sons to anyone because the jaguar had eaten one. The mother would go with them to hunt and when they arrived at a place where there were no people she would give them advice. »When you pursue a dangerous animal don't bite it. The *coati* is bad, the ant-bear too. The fox is not so bad and the white armadillo and iguana are harmless. Take care of snakes, the *yarara*, of the coral, and the *kapitsil*. The rattlesnake is very dangerous. You must know a big fox with a black mouth. Take care of the tapirs; they will seize a dog by the neck and throw it to the ground. Be on your guard when you hunt a male deer, it has horns and can kill you. The male deer has a bad smell, but the female deer has no smell and that is good. If you run after little armadillo (*peludo* in Spanish) he will dig a hole in the ground. Wait until the people come and dig it out and kill it. Turtles are entirely harmless.»

89. The Woman and the Bird[1] (Pedro)

When birds were still men, they lived without women. One day they gathered to sing so that the women could pick

[1] See the tale *Tawkxwax* and the Birds., p. 34.

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as husbands the men who sang and beat drums the best. The *letseniwótáx* sang first and did so well that two women went to live with him. Each bird sang in turn and they sang well that each got a woman and some of them, the *letseniwotax* and the *soytín*, got two. When it was the *suxñay* turn to sing, the bird which sings so mournfully near graves, he sang such a horrible song that a woman who was menstruating filled her hand with blood and smeared on the bird's face. He went to the river to wash his head, but could not remove all the blood and he still has a bit of red around his beak.

90. The Pigeon and the Egret (Pedro)

The pigeon used to have a long beak like the egret. He lived close to the lagoons where he could get fish. One day the piegeon and the heron decided to go fishing together. The pigeon's horse was very fast while the heron's horse was slow. The pigeon made fun of his companion's horse so they decided to separate and see who could get to the lagoon first. The egret had been fishing for a long time when the pigeon arrived. The pigeon started fishing immediately and he was in such a hurry that he broke his beak on the first fish he caught. He did not know what to do. He went to the forest and repaired his beak with wild beans (*poroto del monte* in Spanish). Since that time he has not fished, but has lived in the forest eating fruits and insects.

91. The Humming-bird (Martin)

Once upon a time there were some people. A girl of these people married a young man from another village. The boy was very small and therefore the people would not be friendly with him, they hated and made fun of him and did not believe he was able to sow and fight like the others. The name of this little man was *Tuxtan* and he is said to have been a humming-bird.

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Tuxtan and his wife lived in a little hut opposite the village. He had a dog and a tiny spear and one morning he said to his wife »I will go to hunt tapir.» He went with his dog to a lagoon where all the animals came to drink water. He saw a tapir, killed it and in the evening returned with it on his shoulders. The people saw him with the tapir and they took it away from him, not even leaving him a piece of meat. *Tuxtan* said, »What shall I do?» He went away from the village and cleared a field. He planted pumpkins, melons and all kinds of fruit. At harvest time he would gather his group and put it in a storehouse many miles from the village. In order to store his crop he would be absent from the village several days and when he returned he would bring just enough fruit for his wife. Some children playing in the village discovered near *Tuxtan's* house pumpkin and watermelon rinds. This they called to the attention of their parents. The villagers went in all directions to try and find his fields, they looked for six days and on the seventh they located his storehouse in the forest. They took everything in it, not even a seed was left. *Tuxtan* was again without food and he wondered what he was going to do.

He had a big family in his country and one day he took his spear and arrows and set out across the desert. He came to a lagoon. He remained there waiting for jaguars and ant-bears to come for water. When a jaguar came he killed it and he did the same with an ant-bear. In this way he killed five jaguars. With the skins of the jaguars and ant-bear he made himself some clothes.

He made many arrows and for each bunch of arrows he made a bow. One night he returned to his village to visit his wife. He found her asleep with another. He killed them both. The people knew where *Tuxtan* was living so they buried the woman and her lover and set out after *Tuxtan* to kill him. They found him near the lagoon but *Tuxtan* resisted them and killed all of them except for a chief and a few men. The chief said, »I will go and get more warriors.»

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Tuxtan answered, »I will go home, try to catch me.» The chief gathered all the warriors he could and then went back to attack *Tuxtan*.. One morning he heard the sound of trumpets and knew the warriors were coming. He said to his parents, »I have killed many people, you can escape with your goods, but I will stay here and rout these people, leave me alone.» His family ran away with the exception of his father and brother, they said, »If it is so, we will die with you.» The three destroyed the entire army leaving only the women (XVII).

92. The Chaja and the Charata (Pedro)

In olden times the *chaja* (crested screamer, Chauna torquata) and the *charata* (Ortales Canicollis) had different voices than those they have today. One day the *chaja* went to call on the *charata* and told him that his song was not fit for the forest and suggested that they exchange songs. The *charata* agreed and each went home with the song of the other. Since that time the songs of these birds have been different.

93. The Vulture and the Carancho (Pedro)

The vulture, *hato*, invited the *carancho* (hawk, Falco Rufus) to visit his fields. *Carancho* went with the the vulture but the *hato*'s fields were so hot that the *carancho* burnt himself and almost died. The *carancho* then invited the *hato* to look at his fields. The fields of the *carancho* were so cold that the *hato* barely escaped freezing to death.

94. The Deer and His Children (Pedro)

One day the deer went hunting, leaving his children at home. Before going he told them not to be afraid of the fire and not to run away if they should see it. He hunted for a long time and when he returned he brought some

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guayacan fruit to please his children, but he did not find them at home. They had not followed his advice and the fire had burned them.

95. The Jaguar and His Children (Pedro)

One day the jaguar decided to find out whether his children were cowards. He howled: »whoo, hou, hou.» Some of his children became afraid and some did not. He ate those who were frightened and spared those who were not.

96. The Puma and the Deer (Pedro)

One day the puma felt like eating a deer, but he was afraid since he did not know whether the deer had teeth. He decided to make the deer laugh so he turned around and showed his bottom, but the deer did not laugh. Then the puma showed his penis and the deer began to laugh. The puma saw that the deer had no teeth and so pursued and killed him. He ate one half of the deer immediately and hid the rest.

97. The Fighting Fish (Pedro)

All the fish were angry with *set*, a little fish which swims very fast. The *waxnoLe* fish lay in ambush at the spot where the river falls into the lagoon and opened wide his mouth. He expected the *set* to go into his mouth but the *set*, who is a courageous fish, managed to dodge him and the river water filled the stomach of the *waxnoLe*, which is the reason for this fish having a swollen stomach.

The *surubi* (*alax*) decided to attack the *wahát* (*sabalo*). The *surubi* warriors were more than two hundred strong and they were mounted on horses. They wore leather coats while they lay in ambush awaiting the *sabalo* who were coming down the river. The *sabalo* were not afraid because they were excellent swimmers. In fact the *sabalo* swam by so quickly that the *surubi* could not catch them and further-

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more the *sabalo* struck the *surubi* on their heads and made them one-eyed.

The *katukwetax* (yellow fish) and the *asak* fish, enraged by the misfortune of their friends, the *surubi* fish, decided to avenge them. Although the *atsa* had horses they could not kill the *sabalo*, who jumped from one side of the river to the other. *Set* and *sip* also tried to destroy the *sabalo* but even with their weapons, guns, swords, revolvers, they were as unsuccessful as the others.

The yiwis-fish (Spanish *vieja*) is the doctor of all the fish. If a fish is wounded *yiwis* sucks its wounds and sings like a medicine-man. In this way he manages to get the arrow point out of the wounded fish and the fish recovers. He cures all the fish just as the Matako medicine-men cure people.

One day some men heard a loud noise, like the trampling of a herd. One man went to investigate and he saw a score of donkeys loaded with ashes which were being taken to the *yiwis*. Ashes are the favorite food of this fish.

98. The Quarrel of the Fish (Pedro)

One day *WetyamLi*,[1] who was walking through the forest, heard two fish insulting each other. He went closer and saw the *tsonatáx* and the *ḳalḭ* quarreling. The *tsonatáx* told the *ḳalḭ* that he was ugly and the latter told the *tsonatáx* was even more ugly.

The *WetyamLi* again started walking and heard two other people fighting. This time it was the *kantax* who was telling the *xwolit* that he was bad looking and the former replied that the *xwolit* was still uglier.

Further on *WetyamLi* came upon two other people fighting, they were the *natsax* and the *silḭt*. The *natsax* told the

[1] I was unable to obtain any information about this character. The word *wetyamLi* means a »liar», a man who tells fish stories. It is possible that our *WetyamLi* is a sort of baron Munchhausen of the Matako folklore. See tale p. 74.

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silǫt he was homely and the *silǫt* replied that the *natsax* was even uglier because of his big mouth. *Natsak* in turn said that although his mouth was big, he was not as ugly as the *silǫt* whose mouth was too little.

Further on *WetyamLi* heard the *tsoktax* tell the *etékak* that he was very ugly because his head was flat and the *etékak* replied that he could not be as ugly as the *tsoktax* with his too big fins.

Still further on *WetyamLi* heard two more species of *palometa*[1] quarreling. The *nisčutax* was calling the *timętes* very ugly because his nose was so long and the latter replied that even if his nose was long the eyes of the *nisčútax* were too deeply set in their sockets and his mouth was always open, as if he could not shut it.

99. The War between the Donkeys and the Jaguars (Pedro)

In ancient times the donkey was a man and had a field. Once he sent his son to look at his field and when on the second day his son had not returned he began to wonder if the jaguar had eaten him. He went to the field and found the footprints of a jaguar who had carried his son off. He followed the trail of the jaguar, found him and punished him severely, for the donkey is stronger than the jaguar. The jaguar went home very ill from the kicks he had received. He decided to avenge himself so he organized an army to fight the donkey. In the army were all kinds of animals, the wild pigs, tapirs, foxes and *aguaras*. The donkey also raised an army. His army consisted of donkeys and insects. The jaguar's army stopped at one edge of a glade and the donkey's army stopped at the other side of the glade. The army of the jaguar began to fight and the insects rushed forward and entered the ears, eyes and mouths of the jaguar's army and they fled, greatly frightend. Hence the jaguars' noses are swollen.

[1] Palometa or piranha (*Serrosalmo sp.*).

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100. The Fight of the Serpents (Pedro)

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One day the *kapitsil*, (a big and very poisonous serpent) decided to fight against the ratte-snake. He said he would surely win because he was much the stronger. The rattle-snake realized it would be difficult for him to win because of the size of the *kapitsil*, but he accepted the challenge. They had a terrible fight and at last they killed each other. Their bodies lay on the ground where they had fallen, swollen and rotten.

101. The Dog and the Fox (Pedro)

Formerly the dog was as wild as the fox, who was his friend. One day the dog came close to a village. The people thought he was nice looking and gave him some food. The dog went back and told his friend the fox that he should go with him to the village and stay there where there was plenty of food. The fox did not agree and advised the dog that there would come a day when he would be severely beaten for stealing food. The dog did not pay any attention to the wise advice of his friend and went to live with the people while the fox remained in the bush. One day the fox approached the village and heard the dog crying. He wanted to know what the trouble was and the dog told him that he had stolen some fish and the villagers had beaten him. The fox then reminded him of the advice wherein he had told him what his fate would be.

102. The Ants and the Old Woman (Martin)

Once upon a time there was an old woman. She had two storehouses filled with algarroba pods. The ants heard about it and went to eat her provisions. The women sold one storehouse to the ants. After they had bought it the ants beat a drum during the entire night and at dawn they left the storehouse closed. It was locked for a year and everybody was jealous of the old woman because she refused to give

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away her pods. At the end of the year the old woman opened her storehouse and said, «If the ants don't come to take away their algarroba, I will use it.» When she opened the door nothing was left but the husks, the ants had already eaten everything.

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103. The Jaguar and the Armadillo (Pedro)

One day the jaguar ate the armadillo's children. To avenge himself the armadillo went to the jaguar and told him that he had a stomach ache from eating too many earth worms, and that he wanted to be cured. He opened his armor and the jaguar sucked his stomach in order to take the disease out. The armadillo let the jaguar put his head on his stomach, but the third time he closed his armor and the jaguar's head was caught. The jaguar was choking and tried to break the armadillo's hold by slinging him against a tree but he was held tight. The jaguar died of suffocation. The armadillo then went to an old woman, who cured the wounds made by the jaguar.

104. The Jaguar and the Aguara (Pedro)

Once upon a time the jaguar invited the *aguara* (Canis Azarae) to have a fight with him. He made fun of the *aguara* and pretended he had no strength. The *aguara* accepted the challenge and they fought. The *aguara* managed to have the sun blind the jaguar and taking advantage of this he killed him.

105. The Jaguar and the Alligator

The jaguar challenged the alligator. The latter accepted and, acting as if he were afraid, withdrew slowly. The jaguar, sure that he would be the winner, insulted the *yacaré* and followed him. The alligator entered the lagoon and in his excitement over the fight the jaguar also went into the water. In the middle of the lagoon the alligator began to

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fight and he killed the jaguar by striking him on the head with his tail and biting him on the neck. He let the jaguar rot in the middle of the lagoon.

106. The Dog's Beer (Pedro)

The dog gathered all the filth he could find, put it in a hollow *palo borracho* and made it into beer. When the beverage was ready he invited everyone to come and drink it. Birds and mammals hastened there and drank as much as they could. The animals unused to filth were disgusted and vomited, but the others, used to carrion and dirt, remained and got drunk, danced and sang while the dog beat his drum. (XVIII).

107. The Owl's Beer (Pedro)

The owl (*holit*) made some beer in a little trough and invited everyone in to share it with him. All came, but each carried an axe in case the beer did not hold out. When they arrived and saw the small container they burst into laughter and said that the little vessel would never contain sufficient beer to make them all drunk. The owl said that they should drink without worrying. Whenever the vessel was empty the owl looked at the interior and the vessel would fill again. The owl did this twenty times, until all his guests were drunk. When they left they were so intoxicated that they could not find their axes and furthermore they lost their hats and girdles.

108. WetyamLi[1] and the Deer (Pedro)

One day *WetyamLi* was in the bush. He saw a bee. He threw his stick at it in order to kill it, but he missed and the stick fell to the ground with a loud noise. He went to see what the trouble was and found that instead of killing a bee he had killed a deer. He skinned it, prepared the

[1] See p. 70

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meat and ate it. Then he continued on his way. While he rode his horse's rear foot slipped into a hole full of honey; he removed his horse's hoof and sucked it. Then he went on his way. A little further on he saw a *lachiwana*-bee. Without saying a word he killed it and ate the honey. He ate so much honey he started to choke, so he ran to a pool and drank some water to get the honey down. When he felt better he remounted and attempted to follow a deer. But in the pursuit his horse's testicles rolled themselves around a *palo santo* and broke the the tree down. The tree in falling crushed the horse.

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109. WetyamLi, the Ostrich and the Armadillo (Pedro)

One day as *WetyamLi* was hunting in the bush the strings of his sandals came loose and one of them killed an *ostrich*. *WetyamLi* roasted him and ate him before going further. A little later he heard someone coughing and as he approached the place from which the sound came he saw it was an armadillo. *WetyamLi* was going to kill him but the armadillo begged him to spare his life, explaining that he had almost choked on »mestizo» honey and asked him for something to drink. After the armadillo had drunk the water given him by *WetyamLi* he asked for a bag in which to put honey. He filled the bag with honey and gave it to *WetyamLi*.

WetyamLi went hunting with his dogs and they scented something. He found a little iguana trying to put a big slice of honey into her *sandia del monte* bag. She could not get the honey in because the bag was too small. The dogs followed the little iguana intending to kill her but she begged them to kill her father who was already full grown.

110. The Jaguar and the Tiger-cat (Martin)

The jaguar could not hunt. One day he met a tiger-cat. The tiger-cat said to the jaguar, »Grandfather, why are you

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lean? You use only one paw while hunting, don't you?» The jaguar answered, »I cannot hunt because I use only one paw.» The tiger-cat said, »I will teach you how to catch a bird or an animal with two paws.» Then the tiger-cat went out and caught a bird with both paws. He said, »You must hunt this way.» The jaguar went out and killed a cow, using both his paws. With the help of the wild cat the jaguar learned to hunt.

111. The Fox and the Jaguar (Pedro)

The jaguar is the master of all animals. He appointed the fox to dry meat for him, but he paid his servant very little and he was stingy about the meat he gave the fox. One day, while the jaguar was enjoying his siesta, the fox, who was obliged to keep the flies away from the jaguar, decided to avenge himself. He caught all the flies he could and put them in a bladder full of air. He tied it to the jaguar's tail. The jaguar had dogs who hunted by themselves and signaled to him the presence of game. The jaguar mistook the buzzing of the flies in the bladder for the barking of his dogs which he thought had found some animal. He woke up with a start and said, »It seems my dogs are hunting». He went to fetch his club and ran in the direction from which the noise seemed to come. When he had gone a short distance he heard the same buzzing in another direction and he turned back to the place he had just left, but then he heard the same noise near the spot he had just left. He ran there, but changed his course a few minutes later. He did the same thing four of five times until it occured to him to look at his tail. He understood the trick the fox had played on him and in great anger went home to punish him. In the meantime the fox had fled, taking with him all the jaguar's dried meat.

The jaguar followed his trail. He met a fox but he did not know whether it was the one he was seeking or another. He asked, »Did you steal my meat?» »No, it was my

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father-in-law.» To discover whether the fox was lying the jaguar asked him to defecate and he looked at the excrement. He found only bits of crab meat. The jaguar went away and left the fox in peace.

The jaguar went on a long journey and during his absence he entrusted his wife to the fox. As soon as the jaguar left the fox slept with his wife. Upon the jaguars return he smelt the vulva of his wife and noticed the odor of fox. The jaguar beat his wife and then went in pursuit of the fox, but could not find him.

112. The Jaguar and the Fox (Martin)

There was a jaguar living with his female. A fox called on him and said, »I want to be your companion.» Every day the fox and jaguar went hunting together. The fox called the jaguar »uncle». One day the fox said, »Uncle, I cannot go with you today.» »Well, stay here with your aunt.» The fox remained with the female jaguar. He slept with her and when the jaguar came back he found the fox with his wife. He ran forward to kill him, but the fox fled. The jaguar went after him and at last caught him by a hind leg. The fox mentioned that he had a thorn in his paw and asked the jaguar to lend him his knife. The jaguar handed him the knife, but the fox threw it away. As the jaguar went to pick it up the fox escaped. He concealed himself in a cave. The jaguar picked up a stone and painted it the color of himself and then put it at the entrance to the cave. Each time the fox saw the rock he decided not go out until he was so thirsty and hungry he could stand it no longer. »I will go out even if the jaguar eats me,» said the fox. He went and touched the stone and said, »The jaguar has fooled me.»

113. The Tiger-cat and the Rat

One day while the tiger-cat was hunting he found a rat which he intended to kill but the rat crept into a hole in the ground where the tiger-cat could not catch him. To induce

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him to come out the tiger-cat invited the rat to play with him. The rat said that he would never do that because he knew what the tiger's intentions were. The tiger-cat insisted and insisted, but the rat firmly refused to leave his hole. The tiger-cat threatened to call his friend the owl (*čiličuk*) and have him bring the rat out but the rat said that he would call his good friend the vulture to lift the owl high in the air and drop him on the ground. The tiger-cat was afraid and ran away. The rat then left his hiding place.

114. The Fight between the Fishhook and the Net (Pedro)

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One day the fishhook and the net quarreled. The net said that the fishhook was useless because he could not catch more than one fish at a time, while he, the net, could take many fish at once. The fishhook replied that it was true that the net was able to take many fish at one time, but if a piranha-fish happened to be caught in the net he could cut the threads, let all the fish escape, and make the owner very angry. The hook never let his prey go. The net answered that the fishhook was right, but that it was not exceptional for a *palometa* fish to cut the line from a hook and then the hook would be lost.

115. The Fight between the Earthen Pot and the Iron Pot (Pedro)

The iron pot reproached the earthen pot for not cooking the food fast enough. The earthen pot answered that it was easier to lift to put under the fire and after all he also cooked the food. The two pots fought and naturally the iron pot won.

116. The Fight between the Earthen Pot and the Calabash (Pedro)

The earthen pot once reproached the calabash for not being useful. The earthen said, »When they put you in the water you don't sink, but I sink even if the water is frozen.«

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NOTES

I. The Spirits of the Dead

1) *Husek* (*o-husek* or *no-husek* = my soul) is the »god» we have inside of us when we are living. This spirit goes away when we dream. It does not reside in any particular organ but is everywhere in our body. It is through the *husek* that we know what is going to happen. When we die the *husek* becomes an *āhat*, when the *āhat* dies it becomes a bird called *xwitson*. The *xwitson* becomes an *katak* fly and the fly a *ḳipḳip* bird, the *ḳipḳip* becomes a spider (*xwistę́*) and the *xwistę́* becomes a bat (*asus*) and then disappears.

2) The love spirit is called *soitayax*. She is beautiful, all adorned with necklaces and bracelets, exactly like a woman falling in love. She is very fond of men and it is she who commands women to love. When a woman leaves her husband and goes to another man, it is because her soul has tired of the first husband. In the same way a man takes another wife, his soul craves a change.

3) Now and then the *āhat* comes back shortly after death. In such cases, he is very bad. His eyes are yellow. If an *āhat* comes back he goes directly to the house where women are alone, generally the women become frightened and run away. The *āhat* like to sleep with women. They tell them that they are going to bathe and that they will come back very clean and good-looking.[1]

4) At times the spirit comes back to visit his grave, but this only occurs a few days after death, before he has had time to go to his family house in the underworld.

5) The soul goes to the abode of the dead riding a beautiful horse, well-saddled and carrying all that is necessary for the trip. The soul also drives in a car, from one village to another and wanders everywhere. On his way to the land

[1] It is said that the *āhat* are dirty, but my informant was not of that opinion. He told me that all the *āhat* he had seen were clean and beautiful.

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The medicine-man always knows beforehand when the red grasshopper (*čol*) will come. The striped grasshopper (*talesai*) lives inside a kind of very big gourd (*wotsotáx*). The grasshoppers belong to a master who sends them everywhere. During the summer they are out but at the first cold weather, they return to their squash.

Each year in the month of August, the medicine-men have a ceremony in order to go and see the *lachiwana* bees to ask them to come down to earth once more. For this event the medicine-men snuff *hatax* powder. They go up where the mother of all bees lives. She is as large as a house. To reach her the medicine-men transform themselves into *aguaraguasu* (*Canis jubatus*). The mother of the bees requires presents since she is afraid that by burning the old prairies her children might get burned too.

If someone speaks ill of a medicine-man, the latter's familiar spirit may enter the offender's body and thus avenge the insult. The soul of the medicine-man (*táxumit*) is ferocious. When the medicine-man is at odds with someone, his *táxumit* inflicts illness on the person with whom he is angry and no one except the medicine-man is able to cure the victim. It is wise therefore to stay on good terms with medicine-men.

IV. The Sun and the Medicine-men

The medicine-men may go and visit the Sun, Moon, the Night, the Rain and the Big Fire to make friends with them. During these trips they always go in gangs led by an older man who is expert in the difficult art of overcoming the numerous obstacles they meet on the way. He is the spiritual father of the younger medicine-men. If wandering medicine-men meet those of other villages, they fight and the spirits of those wounded or killed during the trips will be sick or will die on earth, for all that happens to the spirit must inevitably happen to the body. Medicine-men never fight on earth, and only while under the influence of *hatax* do

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IX. Storms

821 761 When a storm approaches with rain and thunder, little children's ears are to be covered each time the thunder crashes, otherwise Rain would take them under his arm and carry them away to his house. When such a thing happens, the child's body, which has remained on earth, becomes lean and white and all the food he takes is of no use. He visibly pines away, and it is not likely that a medicine-man can cure him. He will finally die without the cause of his death being known. The rain cannot do anything to grown-ups or big children, for it has not the strength to carry them away, [841] but it can harm menstruating women who happen to be out during a storm. Then they get very feeble.

X. Shooting Stars

821 787 Shooting stars foretell the death of someone. Meteors are stones thrown by the rain in order to fell the *quebracho*.

XI. Treatment of Snake Bites

752 835 When a serpent bites a man, it goes into the wound and climbs up in his body. When a man's foot is bitten by a-snake the leg must be pressed starting from the thigh, squeezing down to the place where he has been bitten. In so doing, the snake which has already had time to enter the leg, is obliged to go down into the big toe where it rolls itself up, tired. The operation lasts from evening to dawn and when the sun appears the snake gets cramped and vanishes under the ground. Once the snake is out the medicine-man has to suck the wound, for the departing snake has left its skin inside the body of the victim. The patient is completely cured only when the last piece of skin left by the snake has been removed. Otherwise he remains sick, has a headache and gets thinner and thinner.

If the progress of the snake inside the body cannot be stopped, the animal may go up into the head and blind the victim. It also goes to the heart and after repeated bites

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may kill him. The snake's *āhat* is called *punsoya* (perhaps Spanish-ponzoña : poison).

When a man is bitten by a snake he must kill the reptile and take it home in order to be cured rapidly. If he has been bitten while away from his home, he must dig a groove and put the snake into it, facing it in the opposite direction to that which he is taking. Thus the snake cannot enter him.

Tawkxwax taught the men the procedure to be followed in order to cure snake bites.

XII. How to Become a Singer

Those who want to become good singers must go to the bush and stay there for quite a long time. They must kill birds who are good singers and eat them after they have been made into powder and mixed with blood extracted from the arm. When they are in the bush they must first beat a drum, then run. Thus they will perhaps dream about a singing bird. When they wake up they must then take their drums and sing the song they heard in their dreams. One must not awaken until the song is finished or he will not remember it. Everyone has two songs and he must sing them every day in order to learn them. Ordinarily several young men go to the bush and after they have dreamed of a song they sing one after another. Generally three or four days are sufficient to master a song.

One must not sing someone else's song. If after one has eaten a bird he dreams of an iguana, it is no longer worth while to go on, for he will never become a good singer. The birds one dreams about and who teach one how to sing are not ordinary birds, they are *paata* (supernatural beings). The women do not know how to sing but they can cry when they have to mourn. Not all women know how to weep. In order to weep well, a woman must dream about another woman who is a good mourner. There are some exceptional women who can sing.

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584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband disco-
vers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many
women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when
her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover
that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for
[519] there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
[831] rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere
without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the
members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques*
are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened
825 bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to
make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party
did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

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with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[362] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing.

Magic

789 609 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mxsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

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171 are nourished will influence them physically as well as in character, and the Indians have no desire that their children should in any way acquire the natures of such animals.[1])

262 The fear of eating the *heads* of certain animals is probably due to similar ideas. A menstruous woman, as we have seen, is forbidden to 826 eat the head of a parrot, lest she should go mad or be changed into a 774 tiger; and similarly a father, while he is observing the rules of the couvade, must abstain from eating the head of a cow. According to primitive belief the soul or vital power of the body is particularly concentrated in the hair and the head. That the head of a cow is especially regarded as taboo is comprehensible from the fact that animals imported by the whites are generally looked upon with superstitious fear and their flesh avoided by Indians still living in a state of nature.

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[1]) Grubb, *op. cit.* p. 137.

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The favourit colour of the
Indians is red or vermilion, the paint being obtained from the seeds of the plant *Bixa orellana*. But this beautiful shrub does not grow in the Gran Chaco. The Chaco tribes only obtain the paint they appreciate so much from the Indians in the north by means of intertribal commerce.

The Chaco Indians are also in the habit of blackening the face with soot or charcoal on certain occasions.

The typical way of painting the face both for men and women is either to colour the whole face and forehead red with *urucú*, or black with charcoal, or only to apply red or black spots, lines, small squares etc. to the cheeks, to the nose, round the mouth and above the eyes. The eye, which is the organ of the most important sense and the one most exposed to disorders, is generally painted with special care. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are only drawn along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled out; sometimes protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, especially by the women. Among the *Tobas*, persons of both sexes generally have the face and forehead painted red. But besides this typical facial painting the Toba women — seldom the men — are in the habit of making special patterns or ornaments upon their cheeks on certain occasions. The patterns used by the Tobas seem to be comparatively few in number; we do not find among them the same abundance of designs as for instance among the Choroti and the Ashluslay. Custom does not require that any special kind of pattern should be applied on a particular occasion. Every woman, for instance for a religious dance or feast, paints upon her face what designs she likes and invents at the moment.

If one asks a Toba girl why she paints her face, she will in most cases simply give the answer that it is considered beautiful, sometimes she will say that it is to please and attract the men. When I asked other people about the matter I was told that the Toba girls paint themselves when they particularly desired a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive for thus decorating the face, for facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, on closer inquiry I found that the Toba women are in the habit of painting themselves *at the time of their menses*, in order to have a protective charm against the evil influences of which they especially then stand in fear. The ideas

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men abstain from eating fish for some time after the death of a near relation.

Apart from the custom of cutting the hair neither the Tobas nor other Pilcomayo tribes nowadays practise ceremonial mutilations of any kind. Formerly however, as the Tobas told me, they practised the following mourning custom. When a woman died, her eldest son had to cut off one of his finger nails. The nail was fastened to a string and hung round the neck of a dog, which was thereafter driven away. If the son omitted to do this, it was believed that the soul of the woman would enter into the nail and kill him in the shape of a tiger into which it would transform itself. This could be prevented by sending away the nail. The dog carrying it away would meet some other tribesman into which the soul would enter and thus become harmless. for the spirits of the dead are harmful only to the nearest relatives. The Indian who told me this added that the custom is no longer practised by the Tobas, because nowadays it very seldom happens that people are killed by tigers and thus the belief that women are changed into such beasts after death has lost its foundation. This again, according to the Indian belief, is owing to the fact that the medicine-men are now able to provide against such sad eventualities by their incantations and conjurations.

As to the explanation of these observances, we have already seen that the abstention from eating fish is due to the idea that the death-demon may possibly hide in the fish and gain entrance into the body. Of special interest are the mourning customs relating to hair and nails. Hair-cutting as a mourning practice of women is met with among most South American Indians and — like other kinds of mutilation — are essentially purification ceremonies of purely magical significance. In the hair and the nails according to primitive belief the vital power of the human body is concentrated. One who possesses these essential parts of a person's body is believed to possess his soul, through which he will be able to exert magical influence upon him. If this is so, it is conceivable that invisible supernatural enemies would take particular interest in these parts. Consequently, when a woman is in a delicate situation, she takes the precaution to remove and destroy these critical parts of her body. According to Indian belief, women are always more exposed to supernatural dangers than men, and therefore have to be more careful in every respect.

The fear of the dead is also manifested in that their *names* are forbidden to be mentioned. This is another general superstition among the

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the rope as they had done before. The bird was sitting on a tree stump. The women could not see him because he was black and the stump on which he was sitting was also black. As they were stealing the fish the hawk screeched and the people hastened back to see who was there. The women threw seeds at the hawk but he protected himself with his wings. He cut the rope by which the woman had reached earth and they were unable to return to the sky. They were taken as wives by the men. One man lagged behind, he was the armadillo. He dug in a heap of refuse and there found a woman, but he scratched one of her eyes out with his nails. For this reason there are one-eyed women. The women ate with their vulvas and it is said that their vulvas had teeth. The *carancho*[1] — the culture hero — broke the teeth of their vulvas thereby making it possible for men to sleep with women.

66. The First Women (second version) (Pedro)

Once upon a time men lived without women. The women lived by themselves and were savages. They came and plundered the crops raised by men. The men wanted to know who was responsible for the damage done to their crops. They asked a parrot to watch the crops for them. The parrot sat on the top of a tree and he saw the women coming down from the sky. Instead of calling the men he said nothing and as a joke threw a piece of wood at them. The women saw him and invited him down to play with them. He accepted and the women caught him and pulled his tongue out replacing it with a piece of coal.

A *gallinazo* (vultur, *Cathartes foetens*) was chosen to watch the fields next. He promised to inform them by whistling as soon as he saw the women. The vulture concealed himself among the leaves of a tree and when he saw the women he whistled. The men, who were hidden at a distance, ran

[1] Falco Plancus.

X 539 X 773 up to their fields and tried to catch the women. They buried themselves in the ground in an effort to escape, but the armadillo said he would dig them out. He dug out one after another. The men took them. The same thing happened each time he pulled a woman out of the ground. In the end, angry because he could not keep a wife for himself, he put out the eye of a woman and made her so ugly that no one wanted her. From that time on men have had women.

X 539 X 773 826 The wild women had toothed vulvas. A bird saw them eating corn with their vulvas. He warned the people, but *Tawkxwax*, the Trickster, would not believe him and slept with one of the women, who cut his penis. *Tawkxwax* took a bone and put it in place of his lost organ. He then went in pursuit of the woman and found her just as she was crouching to light a fire. He threw a stone between her legs and broke the teeth of her vagina. From that time on men have had sexual intercourse with women without being mutilated.

67. The Stealing of the Fire (Pedro)

X 539 X 773 372 In olden times the jaguar was the sole owner of fire. He would give some of it away only if presents were given him in return. The people would take fish to him and in exchange the jaguar gave them fire with which to cook. Once a rat with a flattened head, the *sičúm*, tried to steal some fire. He dug his way into the earth until he was underneath the hearth of the jaguar. The jaguar had been watching his fire and he saw the rat just as he was about to take an ember. He struck the rat on the head and that is why it is flat now. [825] Another rat succeeded in stealing an ember. This rat has a black spot on his neck. He was lucky enough to get close to the fire without being seen. He picked up an ember and ran off holding it against his neck. He still has a burnt spot there, the mark of the fire. Using the inside of a cactus as tinder he lighted a big fire and then he distributed it. That is why all men have fire.

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M 304 inflammation in the face the girl has to fast for some days after the operation.

M 304 751 Tattooing has a purely magical significance, as may be inferred from the fact that the Mataco and the Choroti women regard it particularly as a protection against disease. Analyzing the custom, we can distinguish at least three factors in it, all of which are associated with magical ideas: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes) rubbed into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised which remain when the wounds have healed. Bleeding and scarification are common practices of purely magical significance among all Indians of South America, and as far as the Pilcomayo tribes are concerned I shall have occasion to mention this custom again in a later chapter. The very scars left after such operations are regarded as a protection against evil spirits. Further, that tattooing is done by means of ashes or soot is certainly not an accident. The use of ashes for superstitious purposes is of frequent occurrence among the Indians, the general idea being that ashes are a prophylactic against evil spirits. The custom of mixing ashes or soot with saliva is significant from the same point of view, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed to the saliva.

M [789]

M [827]

C 304 751 789 All women among the Choroti are tattooed in the same way, that is, have the same marks and patterns applied to the face, and no full-grown woman lacks this tribal characteristic. Since tattooing is regarded as a permanent protection against evil spirits and sickness, it is natural that a woman lacking it should be shunned by the men, but it is not a means of attraction or a »decoration» in the common sense of the word.

T 304 184 [362] As to the *T o b a s*, tattooing or the custom of making indelible marks on the body or the face was formerly in vogue among all Toba tribes as among all peoples of the Guaycurú-group; but the Bolivian Tobas of the present day have dropped this custom, contenting themselves with simple body painting. Tattooing among the Tobas seems to have been limited to the female sex, as indeed is the rule among the Chaco tribes. According to d'Orbigny, the Toba girls were tattooed when they attained puberty and became marriageable. Since the custom is no longer practised by the Bolivian Tobas I have not seen how it is done by them. The procedure, however, is the same as among other Chaco tribes, incisions being made in the face and ashes rubbed into the wounds. As appears from the photographs of some Toba women which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche took in Buenos Aires in 1899 the tattooing practised by the Toba women was exceedingly elaborate and complicated.

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M T C 273

tion to the men shaking rattles, one or more Indians are beating drums and chanting. These noisy ceremonies are continued with short intervals during the whole night. When one party of Indians are tired and stop to rest for a moment, they are relieved by another party, since it is considered very important that there should be no interruption in the ceremonies: otherwise they would lose something of their effect. In the early morning the danger is believed to have passed; the fermentation has taken place, and the evil spirits have not been able to approach the drink and spoil it.

Although this negative object of the rites is particularly emphasized by the Indians, they also have a positive object which is indicated by the very expression »hurry on the fermentation». As we have already seen, the fruit of which the drink is made is believed to be animated by a spirit, and it is the same spirit that is active in the fermented, intoxicating beer. The rites described, while they are supposed to keep off evil spirits, are also intended to influence magically the plant-spirit itself and to bring it to its highest point of development, which is marked by the fermentation. This is partly effected through the chanting, the shaking of rattles, and the drumming, partly through the procedure of mixing the mashed fruit with saliva. The saliva really has the property of bringing about fermentation, and this phenomenon is explained by the superstitious Indian as due to the supernatural virtues which this secretion is believed to possess. Even the fact that only *old* women chew the fruit is probably not accidental. Old people have by nature a stronger magical power than the young and their saliva has therefore greater efficacy.

M T C [827 888]

The Chaco Indians not only try to promote the growth of the fruits by shaking rattles and drumming, but also by *dancing*. Thus the Toba dance *Nahót dónnaran* is not only performed in cases of sickness, but also with a view to »hurrying on» the chanar fruit (*niapílák tákkai*). Once I witnessed such a ceremony. The chañar fruit — next to the algaroba the most important of the fruits growing in the Chaco forests — reaches maturity in the month of October and forms the staple food of the Indians during that month. The dance was performed in the following way. The fruit gathered in during the day was spread out on cloths or big hides on the ground outside the houses, where they are generally laid to dry. The dance took place at night. A young man began to dance alone, stamping alternately with his feet on the ground, without using any rattle, and chanting at first in a low voice. Gradually his movements

T 789
T [262 824]
T [251]

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CHAPTER XVII.

Magical ornaments and amulets.

In my *Civilization of the South American Indians* I have shown that most Indian ornaments have originally had a purely magical significance, although among tribes affected by European culture they have gradually lost this significance and become real »decorations». Among the Chaco Indians also this course of development is conspicuous, for instance with regard to tattooing, body-painting, and the majority of other personal ornaments. The principles of *tattooing*, as it is practised by the Choroti, Mataco, and Tobas, have been set forth by me in a previous chapter.[1]) Tattooing is first of all closely related to scarification and bleeding, customs quite commonly practised by the Indians in all parts of South America. Blood-letting is in itself regarded as a method of purifying the human organism from evil and impure spirits. The spirits are supposed to enter the system, and especially to mix in the blood, thus giving rise to ailments of different kinds and to a state of weakness in the particular part of the body to which they have attached themselves. The Indian thinks that by bleeding that part he will rid himself of the dangerous intruder, just as he sometimes thinks it will leave his body with the mere perspiration, and this belief is naturally supported by the fact that in certain cases such purgations may really give some relief. The Chaco Indians are quite familiar with this idea. Thus among the *Choroti* it is a common thing for the men to bleed themselves with a sharp bone obtained from a certain »magical» animal or a splinter of a certain wood before certain important undertakings. Thus they say that, by drawing blood from the arm, the limb will get more strength for pulling the bow; the practice is therefore especially

M 789

M 783 827

C 783 827 224

[1]) See *supra*, pp. 89 sq.

[p. 179]

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relatives of the patient) and three dancers. All wore rattles. 755

The medicine-men sang and blew on the patient, who shook the bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in one place and let their rattles jingle. The dancers then started to run from left to right and thus made a complete circle. For the second turn, when they arrived at the height of the sticks, they reversed and ran around in the opposite direction, then reversed again and so on. While the assistants were stamping their feet, singing and shaking their rattles, the medicine-men went on singing and blowing. The patient had not moved during the dance. After they had run around ten times, the dancers went to rest, smoke and talk with the assistants, but the medicine-men still blew and shook their rattles. The patient was still motionless. After a quarter of an hour the dance was resumed, this time to the accompaniment of the patient's bells and rattles which all present were shaking. All seemed to be rather happy. The ceremony was then over and they sat down to smoke. The sticks were removed and the ornaments taken off, first those of the medicine-men, then the assistants and dancers, and finally those of the patient. The patient returned quietly to his hut. 755 535

XV. Sexual Life

Before marriage nothing prevents young people from having a free sexual life. The girls paint their faces red if they have had sexual intercourse the preceding night. 836 302

In love affairs before marriage it is always the women who take the initiative. 836

If a man has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman his loins and head will ache. As for the woman, she is in no danger. 833 841

You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. 834 828

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs. 768

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family. 756 768

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon. 765 [302 264]

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning. 775 768

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment 787 [828]

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NOTES

I. The Spirits of the Dead

1) *Husek* (*o-husek* or *no-husek* = my soul) is the »god» we have inside of us when we are living. This spirit goes away when we dream. It does not reside in any particular organ but is everywhere in our body. It is through the *husek* that we know what is going to happen. When we die the *husek* becomes an *āhat*, when the *āhat* dies it becomes a bird called *xwitson*. The *xwitson* becomes an *katak* fly and the fly a *ḳipḳip* bird, the *ḳipḳip* becomes a spider (*xwistę́*) and the *xwistę́* becomes a bat (*asus*) and then disappears.

2) The love spirit is called *soitayax*. She is beautiful, all adorned with necklaces and bracelets, exactly like a woman falling in love. She is very fond of men and it is she who commands women to love. When a woman leaves her husband and goes to another man, it is because her soul has tired of the first husband. In the same way a man takes another wife, his soul craves a change.

3) Now and then the *āhat* comes back shortly after death. In such cases, he is very bad. His eyes are yellow. If an *āhat* comes back he goes directly to the house where women are alone, generally the women become frightened and run away. The *āhat* like to sleep with wofien. They tell them that they are going to bathe and that they will come back very clean and good-looking.[1]

4) At times the spirit comes back to visit his grave, but this only occurs a few days after death, before he has had time to go to his family house in the underworld.

5) The soul goes to the abode of the dead riding a beautiful horse, well-saddled and carrying all that is necessary for the trip. The soul also drives in a car, from one village to another and wanders everywhere. On his way to the land

[1] It is said that the *āhat* are dirty, but my informant was not of that opinion. He told me that all the *āhat* he had seen were clean and beautiful.

a) *Conception*

831 Sperm is located in the knee. In order to cause an abun-
262 dant secretion of sperm, it is advisable to drink broth and milk and to eat chickens. It is important not to drink the broth of a bird called *čana* for the child would then be lazy. In order to have healthy children it is highly recommended that the broth of an aquatic bird called *aṣḳan* be drunk;
842 The child is formed by the sperm which is assimilated into milk. The »milk» coagulates and fills up the matrix, thus do children form themselves gradually. The presence of the child in a mother's womb prevents the blood from
[843] flowing and menstruation stops. Pregnancy lasts eight months.

842 It is impossible for a man not to procreate children. Only
789 women can be sterile. Sterility may occur because the woman has been stopped up by a medicine-man, thus man's »milk» can no longer penetrate into her bosom. This may be accounted for in two ways. A woman may ask a medicine-man to make her sterile, or a bad medicine-man may make a woman sterile in order to harm her family. Sterility may be cured by a medicine-man, but the task is not easy and there are few who will attempt it.

b) *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

843 A pregnant woman works but little, she most eat sufficient, but not too much, food. The child, still in the mother's womb, sucks the food absorbed by its father and mother and if they were to eat too much the child would get fat and would be unable to come out. The husband of an expectant mother must give up certain kinds or work. He cannot use a knife or an axe for the strokes of any cutting instrument might kill or wound the child. He must not wear boots lest the child's legs be crooked. If he keeps his hat on his head the skull of the child will be flat. He must not write with ink lest the child's face be covered with marks.

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[519] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
[831] must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
[627] by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp. C 622

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time. C M 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. M 595 [588] [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always! M 844

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them. C M● 832●

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even M 832

downcast and dejected. Faustino whispered to me: "Say a-aiss to her, with feeling." I said softly into her ear: "a-aiss," and the Indian beauty in spite of herself broke into an imperceptible smile for I had said to her: "You are very pretty!!" On another occasion I had gone to an encampment to witness the treatment given to an invalid by the Indian doctors; there was there also a young girl, the prettiest Indian girl I have as yet seen. 832

A lieutenant joined us and said to me out loud "What a good looking girl!" "Yes indeed" I replied. And the girl, back there in the shadows said: "Teniente toj tzi-la-taj" which means "the lieutenant is very handsome" -- but she said it in such a charming way, half ingenuous and half malicious, hiding her face behind the back of another person who was there and flashing at the same time such a meaningful glance that I really envied the handsome lieutenant.

Following is a transcription of a conversation between two young people: 521

He: "Who can that pretty one be whom I am liking so much?"
She: "Who can that good-looking one be whom I am loving so much?" (This is a sort of endearing refrain which they apparently use a great deal) -- Then, coming close to each other:
He: "Every time I see you I feel a desire to carry you off -- who knows but that some day you will lie in my arms."
She: Who knows -- as we walk we make progress."
He: "If you love me let me caress you."
She: "You must not do so even if you love me, for you belong to another."
He: "There is no one who can reproach me. I am single, and if I were not single I would not speak to you like this -- Goodbye! I am leaving tomorrow; I shall be absent for two years..."
She: "Oh...I am so sorry! I shall miss you if you leave..."
He: "Don't marry anyone else while I am away...I shall bring you a necklace, a kerchief to cover yourself, needles and thread... Goodbye!" [186]
She: "Goodbye...come back soon."

I refrain from transcribing the Mataco version for fear of boring the reader. But tell me if in this dialogue which I have here set down the same feelings and expressions cannot be found which are common with us.

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that all movement is impossible except to stamp, the spiral begins to unfold itself, first very slowly, then more and more quickly. The dancers are sometimes many. The circle divides into two files which develop simultaneously on both sides of the enclosure.

5. The young men form a file from the center of the dance enclosure to the outer border. Each dancer puts his hand on the shoulder of one neighbor and his other hand on the hip of his other neighbor. The file starts slowly to move; the man in the center whirls himself in a circle and the others follow the movement. The movement is faster toward the outer ends of the file and is accompanied by songs. Sometimes the singing stops but the movement goes on, then the singing starts again.

From time to time the dance is interrupted by a young man following a girl. After they have been running through the dancing place of the village they ordinarily sleep together and on the following day appear with their faces painted red.

According to my informant the dancing songs have no meaning, being mere rhythmic utterances.

XIX. Mourning Rites

A man is buried in the bush in a grave about six feet deep immediately after dying. The dead are buried reclining on their right sides with their faces toward their fields. If they were placed in any other position they could not find the way to their houses and they would become lost. No food is given to the dead except a calabash half filled with water. The soul drinks this water to quench his thirst during his journey to the underworld. All the personal belongings of the deceased are burned and their souls come out to join the soul of their owner. His animals are not killed, but when they die their souls join that of their master.

Immediately after death all grown up members of the deceased, even very remote relatives, begin to weep, ac-

855 and carry on, his mother essayed to see whether dragging him off to some distance from the hut would help, but he struggled and rolled on the ground. Finally she controlled him and, without any short temperedness, and laughing all the time she set him down a few yards from the house where the child continued to cry but did not dare to return.

857 861 This same gentleness and absence of brutality can be observed among playing children. Thus, on numerous occasions I have been able to observe little children vying for possession of a small ball; they would push and charge into each other, but never maliciously or violently. Mataco education stresses sweetness and gentleness and a [157] violent man or one of evil character (witsax) [? Translator] inspires them with fear and disgust. From the tenderest age children learn to share their food. When I used to distribute candy the children would never fail to let the absent ones know so that they might have a part of what was being given.

Abortion and Infanticide

847 Abortion and infanticide used to be practiced by the Matacos on a large scale, as also among the other Chaco tribes. According to my informants, a woman has an abortion when she is pregnant and not married; when she has been abandoned by her husband or, after a quarrel with him, for vengeance. Many women undergo abortions when they are [12] pregnant for the first time, in the hope that such action will make future deliveries easier.

It is very generally held that the Chaco Indian women use powerful drugs to cause abortion, but this is doubtless merely legendary. The aids of which they make use are purely mechanical. During the fifth month after conception they get a friend to pound them on their abdomen until the blood begins to flow.

Marriage

832 In amorous relations the young girls appear to take more of the initiative than do the men. They easily become provocative and make

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying, "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

595 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyuhlhl*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklasik*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
837 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
548 self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
182 self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognized by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
533 evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
534 and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
304 requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

831 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence intimate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
583 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
836 girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of
[581] sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit
[582] the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

Ee 838 171 c Ce [113]

/224 cont./

According to Westermarck (2), homosexuality is very

2. Westermarck: Ursprung und Entwickelung der Moralbegriffe /Origin and Development of Ideas of Morality/. Vol. II. Leipzig, 1909.

widespread among the Indians of America. The conception that this is a disgrace is by no means as marked everywhere as it is among the Indians mentioned here.

Ce 839 171 c Ce 833 171 [839]

/225/ Among the Chané and Chiriguano I did not hear anything about onanism. Among the Choroti, on the other hand, it is said to be practiced by the men who are ignored by the women at a dance.

Perversions in the relationship between men and women, which were common in ancient Peru, do not seem to occur here. The primitive mammal position in coitus is said to be common among the Chaco tribes.

M 832 824

Mataco gave me a root which they used as an aphrodisiac.

Ea 825 773 839

The relationship between human beings and animals is so intimately intertwined in the legends of the Indians that one cannot always determine whether they mean the one or the other. The legends that describe love affairs between human beings and animals are not descriptions of bestiality, which seems to be unknown among these Indians.

Ea 834 171

The sense of modesty has developed very differently among these peoples. It seems to me to depend very much on the mode of dress. None of these Indian men or women of whom I have spoken here regards it as improper, insofar as they have not been completely corrupted or civilized, to expose the upper part of the body. The Chiriguano and Chané women are much more ashamed than the Choroti and Ashluslay when they expose the sexual parts. The latter were very reluctant to undress completely in order to be photographed. I did not even dare propose such a thing to the former.

Ee [126]

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

relatives of the patient) and three dancers. All wore rattles. 755

The medicine-men sang and blew on the patient, who shook the bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in one place and let their rattles jingle. The dancers then started to run from left to right and thus made a complete circle. For the second turn, when they arrived at the height of the sticks, they reversed and ran around in the opposite direction, then reversed again and so on. While the assistants were stamping their feet, singing and shaking their rattles, the medicine-men went on singing and blowing. The patient had not moved during the dance. After they had run around ten times, the dancers went to rest, smoke and talk with the assistants, but the medicine-men still blew and shook their rattles. The patient was still motionless. After a quarter of an hour the dance was resumed, this time to the accompaniment of the patient's bells and rattles which all present were shaking. All seemed to be rather happy. The ceremony was then over and they sat down to smoke. The sticks were removed and the ornaments taken off, first those of the medicine-men, then the assistants and dancers, and finally those of the patient. The patient returned quietly to his hut. 755 535

XV. Sexual Life

Before marriage nothing prevents young people from having a free sexual life. The girls paint their faces red if they have had sexual intercourse the preceding night. 836 302

In love affairs before marriage it is always the women who take the initiative. 836

If a man has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman his loins and head will ache. As for the woman, she is in no danger. 833 841

You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. 834 828

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845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana. All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child. In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

852 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert. When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child. The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

CHAPTER IV.

Courtship and marriage.

A salient feature in the social life of all Chaco tribes, and one in which they differ considerably from the tribes whom I learned to know in tropical South America, is the great sexual liberty allowed to young people before marriage. As soon as a girl has passed her first menstruation she is considered free to choose for herself occasional lovers, and generally she does not delay in making use of this right. This free sexual life is particularly indulged in during the algaroba season, in connection with the feasts and dances which then take place. The girls avoid the natural consequences of this sexual license by abortion or infanticide, customs which are also approved by the social morality of the Chaco Indians. Having enjoyed this free life for some years, the girl ultimately decides to marry, and then as a rule becomes a faithful wife as long as the husband does not himself neglect his duties towards her. This general state of things is met with all along the Pilcomayo, although customs of course differ to some extent in different tribes. I shall first relate the customs practised among the Choroti in courtship and marriage.

The *Choroti* are a strictly monogamous people. During my stay among the different Choroti tribes I never found a single case of polygamy, and I was moreover able to confirm that polygamy is strongly disapproved of by custom and the social morality of the people. It is first of all rendered impossible by the jealousy of the women who, as I have mentioned before, have a decisive influence in matters of love and take the first step towards contracting marriage.

Courtship therefore among the Choroti assumes rather a peculiar form, inasmuch as the girls play the active, and the young men the passive part. Marriages are as a rule contracted during the algaroba season from November to March, when there is a good supply of food in the villages and

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

C 581 584

or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

C 581 593

Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelite*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeñlitse sima*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C 585

Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 ●636 584

Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M 585 789 535

When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

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You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. §34 §28

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

that all movement is impossible except to stamp, the spiral begins to unfold itself, first very slowly, then more and more quickly. The dancers are sometimes many. The circle divides into two files which develop simultaneously on both sides of the enclosure. 535

5. The young men form a file from the center of the dance enclosure to the outer border. Each dancer puts his hand on the shoulder of one neighbor and his other hand on the hip of his other neighbor. The file starts slowly to move; the man in the center whirls himself in a circle and the others follow the movement. The movement is faster toward the outer ends of the file and is accompanied by songs. Sometimes the singing stops but the movement goes on, then the singing starts again.

From time to time the dance is interrupted by a young man following a girl. After they have been running through the dancing place of the village they ordinarily sleep together and on the following day appear with their faces painted red. 832 302 836

According to my informant the dancing songs have no meaning, being mere rhythmic utterances. 533

XIX. Mourning Rites

A man is buried in the bush in a grave about six feet deep immediately after dying. The dead are buried reclining on their right sides with their faces toward their fields. If they were placed in any other position they could not find the way to their houses and they would become lost. No food is given to the dead except a calabash half filled with water. The soul drinks this water to quench his thirst during his journey to the underworld. All the personal belongings of the deceased are burned and their souls come out to join the soul of their owner. His animals are not killed, but when they die their souls join that of their master. 764

Immediately after death all grown up members of the deceased, even very remote relatives, begin to weep, ac-

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aloja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *owutshe;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyutithlí*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *samuklaněk*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
[548] self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

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5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *caraguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

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5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important [577] factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should [684] possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizziness increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

family suspected that she had taken the fruit although she showed none of the usual symptoms. One of her sons asked the missionary for help. As soon as she realized she had been discovered, she jumped up and vehemently denied having taken poison. The son insisted that she had and that she was trying to deceive her family and the missionary. To make sure that she was in no danger, the missionary decided to give her an emetic. The old woman struggled violently, throwing off everyone who approached her; only after an hour's strenuous fight was she overcome and forced to take the purge. Of course her stomach contained large quantities of the poison, which she had timed very carefully to take effect early in the morning when everyone would be deep in sleep and, therefore, unaware of her condition. Had it not been for her son's persistence, she undoubtedly would have been found dead the next day. Her husband, who was devoted to her, appeared to be quite unconcerned and, had the matter been left with him, would have done nothing to save her.

In general, love affairs are said to be the main cause of these suicides. They are particularly frequent on the occasions of the nightly dances which are closely connected with the sexual life of the Matako and at such times may take epidemic proportions. A young man will take poison for some reason and soon after others follow suit. Asked why they try to kill themselves, they explain that they feel compelled to do so by some superior force. The fruit attracts them; the desire to eat it becomes an obsession. When they walk in the bush their attention becomes riveted upon the fruit, which they see everywhere, until the temptation becomes too strong and they eat it.

Young boys at school are quite likely to take poison when they have been scolded by their teacher. For this reason the missionaries must exercise particular care to avoid offense when the poisonous fruit is ripe and, consequently, especially dangerous.

Actually there is a great deal of ostentation in these suicides. It is likely that many who take poison, do not take a fatal dose. Those who really wish to die generally take the poison secretly and try to conceal the fact until it is too late to help them. The others, on the contrary, boast about what they have done and are willing, even eager to get medical treatment.

This mania also has its simulators and fakers. Certain individuals imitate all the clinical symptoms, —convulsions, foaming, etc.— without having tasted the deadly fruit. Here again the desire to show off, to be the center of attention is foremost. Every suicide attempt provokes turmoil in the village and everyone flocks to the house where

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any
621 authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come
585 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days,
591 doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's
595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery
837 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having
684 affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose
776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

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out chunks of flesh, and can even [180] be of some slim service, similar to that which is told concerning that fellow in the "Ricciardetto." It is an ovoid, laterally flattened fish. The ray is round, vertically flattened and has three barbs on its tail. It can make a very painful and dangerous wound with the middle barb when the fish is stepped on and lashes out with its tail. Some grow to be over a meter in diameter. It lies on the bottom of quiet pools, as close as it can to the bank; it would seem to be viviparous. The yacaré, a kind of crocodile, will without warning bite the leg or arm of an unfortunate father, drag him to the bottom and there devour him.

So it is that bathing, which was so necessary to cool ourselves off in the suffocating heat, was always embittered by the presence of these maneaters.

The married woman is faithful to her husband by inclination, education and fear. There are tales of terrible revenges wreaked by husbands upon their unfaithful wives, over whom they have power of life and death. While they are single they can be and often are free in their ways. It cannot be doubted that the whites attract their interest, if matters of racial difference do not intervene, for the poorest white is always in a position to give better presents than is the richest chief.

These women love decorations and clothing, but have no use for skirts or corsets. They wrap themselves from the waist down in a blanket, and hold it up with a belt or cord which is hidden behind the fold of cloth. In addition to this they know how to distribute these rags in such a way as to accentuate their good figure and yet at the same time not encumber themselves, a skill not to be expected on first seeing them. Their dress consists of robes, and when they have any they put them all on, be it winter or summer, partly because of the nomadic existence they lead and partly because they like to do so. One might say that the saying: what wards off cold also wards off heat, is particularly applicable to them.

Both men and women love bright colors (particularly red) and variety, but they also like white cloth. When they put on any garment they always do so in such a way as to leave one arm free. The women have a high regard for the kind of shirts which we wear.

The women make their own ornaments out of leather and broken shells, achieving a certain elegance of form, though with a greater or lesser degree of rusticity. They wear, from childhood, a sort of

In places such as these in which women lose their attractions at an early age and in which men are decimated by the constant wars, the custom of polygamy is a social necessity for the tribe which would otherwise run out of members, and a physical necessity for the men and for many women who would otherwise stay single. Nevertheless there are not lacking loose women, free in their favors, for whom the Indians use the name of amoeccue. M 595 M 837

The man is jealous and cruel to his wife if he suspects her of infidelity. While we were visiting the camp of Peilo we had the opportunity of hearing a husband, deep within one of the huts, beat and threaten his wife with death because she had been careless and fallen into the hands of a soldier. Nu-a-ilon-lá (I shall kill you) he ground out between his teeth. On another occasion a woman, after her husband had been absent for two years, took up with another man; the husband returned, lay in wait, ran after and caught his wife and slit her belly open with a knife before the whites could prevent it. This woman did not die and as soon as she was well returned to live with her would-be murderer.

When the Indians intend to get married they dye their cheeks and the region around the eyes red. The man will give his love a present at the time he makes his proposal and if the woman gives [184] an affirmative answer the man gives her a dowry of whatever he has, such as sheep, chickens, skins, etc. M 584 [302]

If the families approve of the union the couple goes to live near one of them, should they not approve then the pair leave the hut and often even leave the camp. Once consent is granted, the nuptial ceremony is the act of consummation.

Among the Chiriguanos, when a man wants to ask for a girl's hand he places a bundle of firewood and a small deer or other provision at her door; if on the following morning the woman lights the fire and prepares a meal with the food supplied, the proposal is considered accepted and the suitor repairs to the table. Some people hold that this is also a Mataco custom, but the facts which I have been able to glean about the matter do not confirm this. C 584

The Chiriguano chiefs, however, have a privilege, which is that they cannot be rejected by the women of their choice: this is a great stroke of luck for them. The chief reveals his inclination with the offering of a piece of meat or some other thing; the girl cooks it, and they then share both meal and bed. The chiefs, especially the C 584 622

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

CHAPTER IV.

Courtship and marriage.

A salient feature in the social life of all Chaco tribes, and one in which they differ considerably from the tribes whom I learned to know in tropical South America, is the great sexual liberty allowed to young people before marriage. As soon as a girl has passed her first menstruation she is considered free to choose for herself occasional lovers, and generally she does not delay in making use of this right. This free sexual life is particularly indulged in during the algaroba season, in connection with the feasts and dances which then take place. The girls avoid the natural consequences of this sexual license by abortion or infanticide, customs which are also approved by the social morality of the Chaco Indians. Having enjoyed this free life for some years, the girl ultimately decides to marry, and then as a rule becomes a faithful wife as long as the husband does not himself neglect his duties towards her. This general state of things is met with all along the Pilcomayo, although customs of course differ to some extent in different tribes. I shall first relate the customs practised among the Choroti in courtship and marriage.

The *Choroti* are a strictly monogamous people. During my stay among the different Choroti tribes I never found a single case of polygamy, and I was moreover able to confirm that polygamy is strongly disapproved of by custom and the social morality of the people. It is first of all rendered impossible by the jealousy of the women who, as I have mentioned before, have a decisive influence in matters of love and take the first step towards contracting marriage.

Courtship therefore among the Choroti assumes rather a peculiar form, inasmuch as the girls play the active, and the young men the passive part. Marriages are as a rule contracted during the algaroba season from November to March, when there is a good supply of food in the villages and

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

NOTES

I. The Spirits of the Dead

1) *Husek* (*o-husek* or *no-husek* = my soul) is the »god» we have inside of us when we are living. This spirit goes away when we dream. It does not reside in any particular organ but is everywhere in our body. It is through the *husek* that we know what is going to happen. When we die the *husek* becomes an *āhat*, when the *āhat* dies it becomes a bird called *xwitson*. The *xwitson* becomes an *katak* fly and the fly a *ḳipḳip* bird, the *ḳipḳip* becomes a spider (*xwistę́*) and the *xwistę́* becomes a bat (*asus*) and then disappears.

2) The love spirit is called *soitayax*. She is beautiful, all adorned with necklaces and bracelets, exactly like a woman falling in love. She is very fond of men and it is she who commands women to love. When a woman leaves her husband and goes to another man, it is because her soul has tired of the first husband. In the same way a man takes another wife, his soul craves a change.

3) Now and then the *āhat* comes back shortly after death. In such cases, he is very bad. His eyes are yellow. If an *āhat* comes back he goes directly to the house where women are alone, generally the women become frightened and run away. The *āhat* like to sleep with women. They tell them that they are going to bathe and that they will come back very clean and good-looking.[1]

4) At times the spirit comes back to visit his grave, but this only occurs a few days after death, before he has had time to go to his family house in the underworld.

5) The soul goes to the abode of the dead riding a beautiful horse, well-saddled and carrying all that is necessary for the trip. The soul also drives in a car, from one village to another and wanders everywhere. On his way to the land

[1] It is said that the *āhat* are dirty, but my informant was not of that opinion. He told me that all the *āhat* he had seen were clean and beautiful.

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584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband disco-
vers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many
women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when
her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover
that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for
[578] there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
[831] rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere
without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the
members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques*
are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened
bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to
make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party
did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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[152]

in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom [586] does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints [822] of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

NIELS FOCK
University of Copenhagen,
July 1962.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

and jerky contractions. A strong diarrhea is also a concomittant effect of the poisoning.

Those who have been saved by prompt medical treatment (injection or morphine) describe their symptoms as follows: At first they feel considerably depressed, then they grow more and more dizzy "as if the world were going head over heels". The dizzines increases until the victim is forced to lie down.

It is apparent from the cases cited here that suicide among the Matako does not always take a collective form, but it may frequently do so. Death by suicide appears to be a temptation to which individuals yield with amazing facility and which is often contagious.

Case Histories

The very day I arrived at the Mission of San Andrés on the Upper Pilcomayo I was made aware of the frequency of suicide by poisoning. A young Indian in the mission suddenly took sick. (He was suffering from malaria.) At the first sign of his illness, his family rushed to the missionary to tell him the young man had eaten sachasandia and to ask for prompt help.

Later there was a real alarm when a young woman actually did attempt to kill herself. The woman had a lover who lived in another village with his wife and two children. The man's grandmother (Mother's mother) feared that he might desert his family and took steps to prevent such a disgrace. For this reason she called on the missionary and urged him to interfere. The missionary talked to the girl's parents and learned from them that the girl's lover often stayed at their home. A few days before the young woman had gone to her lover's village and had snatched a knife and other goods from his house. When she returned to her home, she demanded a compensation before she would break off relations with the man. Afterwards she suddenly left home and went to call on distant relatives in whose house she went to sleep. When these people wanted to send her back, they were unable to wake her. An old woman noticed a faint smell of sachasandia on her breath and immediately sent for the missionary. The limbs of the patient were already twitching, her mouth rigid. After an injection of morphine she began to vomit and so recovered.

Second Case. At another mission a 16 year old orphan committed suicide. The girl had had several love affairs but had formed no stable tie with a man. Finally she ate sachasandia and, since no one came to her assistance, died in the middle of the village. A woman took the dead orphan's head on her lap and her distant relatives wailed the whole day and night. Afterwards, however, the body was left

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

the victim awaits death. It is said that some men take poison to blackmail a woman into complying with their wishes.

It has been noticed time and again that only young people eat sachasandia as a rule. Among the cases cited above there is only one of an elderly woman who attempted to take her life. In this connection, the question arises of whether suicides are more common among women than among men. No data on this point have been gathered, but it is the impression of the missionaries that suicide is equally common among men and women with perhaps a slight majority among women. The first problem raised by the frequency of these suicides is whether the suicides are caused by new conditions of life —by culture clash and lack, of adjustment to a new world— or whether they were equally frequent formerly when the native culture still functioned? Since no Matako group now lives in its earlier surroundings, the truth of the matter will be difficult to learn. If the problem is presented to the missionaries who are largely responsible for the disappearance of the Indian culture, they always insist that suicides were one of the worst manifestations of the culture before the Indians were saved. They point out, moreover, that the number of suicides was particularly high at the time when the missionaries began their work in the region, and they establish a close relation between suicide and dancing. One of the missionaries wrote to me: "In the old days when the Indians were still dancing, there used to be as many as a dozen attempted suicides in one day, resulting in my being up most of the night going from one to another. They were so many and so frequent, however, and it happened so long ago that I can remember none in detail". This evidence is confirmed by other missionaries who recall that the worst epidemics always occured in connection with the night dances which have a decidedly sexual character. At such times young married men who took part in the entertainments slept with girls, thus arousing the jealousy of their wives and the anger of their mothers-in law. If as a result one or two people committed suicide, others would follow their example.

The link established between night dances and suicide was the main reason for the strict tabu against dancing which is now enforced in every mission. Indians have been made so aware of the evil of dancing that even little girls have been kept from their normal and charming jumping about. Missionaries, however, are not responsible for this measure; it has been self-imposed by the Indians.

No cases of suicide are known among other tribes who live in the same region and under similar conditions. At any rate, I have never

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433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

855 861 868 member of his own tribe. In the training of the Indian children the power of example and the natural desire to imitate has the most effect. It is interesting to note how the young boys constantly watch the occupations of the elder men and how easily in this way they acquire the necessary skill in the same occupations, above all in fishing and hunting. When the Toba boy is about six or seven years old, his father makes him a small bow and arrows with which he frequently practises shooting, thus at an early age acquiring dexterity in managing the weapon. Similarly the girls follow their mothers everywhere, down to the river, to the fields, and the forest, keenly watching how she does her work and soon learning to do the same.

881 As far as I know, no particular ceremonies are performed among the Choroti and Mataco with young boys at the attainment of puberty, nor do the present day Tobas in Bolivia practise any ceremonies of this kind. According to some ancient writers, the Tobas of the 18th century practised certain ceremonies with young boys, consisting of a peculiar arrangement of their hair and in pricking them on the body with sharp-pointed bones, but since the particular purpose of these ceremonies was to initiate them into the profession of a warrior, I shall reserve the details till later on, in treating of Indian warfare.

On the other hand, when a young girl has her first menstruation and becomes marriageable, the incident is celebrated among all Chaco tribes with certain feasts, dances, beer-drinking, and purely religious rites. In order fully to understand these ceremonies it is necessary to know the ideas which the Indians entertain about the mysterious phenomena of puberty. It is by no means sufficient to say that the puberty ceremonies simply serve to initiate the girl into her coming sexual life; their significance is much deeper.

881 941 [821] The physiological process which causes the menstruation of the women, incomprehensible as it seems to the Indian, strikes him as something extremely mysterious and must needs give rise to certain superstitious beliefs. Thus both the Tobas and the other Chaco tribes seem to have the idea that this strange phenomenon is caused, or at any rate influenced, by the new moon. Moreover, since the menstrual periods, and especially the first menses, are as a rule connected with certain nervous disorders and other alterations in the physical condition of the woman, it is naturally thought that during these critical days she is seriously exposed to the influence of evil spirits. At the same time, of course, owing to the awakening sexual desire, the relationship between this physiological

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process and the other procreative functions of the woman is realized. The attainment of puberty therefore for the Indian girl certainly means the beginning of her sexual life, but at the same time it means her entrance into a very critical epoch of development, during which she is often — especially at child-birth and during the following menses — exposed to supernatural dangers. Hence the initiation ceremonies at puberty have for their object partly her direct protection against these dangers for the time being, partly her purification once for all from the evils associated with her sexual functions during the years to come or — to express it more plainly — to *harden* her against evil spirits. From this point of view we have to regard all puberty ceremonies of the Indians, even such practices as painting, scarification, and tattooing of the body or face, often undertaken with girls on the attainment of puberty.

In the dances and conjurations performed in honour of girls at puberty it is the women who, contrary to what is generally the rule in religious ceremonies, play the most prominent part. Among the *Choroti* the puberty of girls is celebrated with a magical dance called *Káusima* after the instrument which the women use for it; the instrument is called *káhuis*. The *káhuis* is a dancing-staff, two or three meters in length, made of a light kind of wood or bamboo, which has a bunch of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These rattles produce a hollow sound when the staff is struck on the ground and are supposed to possess a mysterious power to influence the spirits. This power of course must be explained from the fact that to the Choroti the deer is a demoniacal animal. The *káhuis* staff is the only magical instrument used by the Choroti women and it is never handled by the men.

The dance begins at the first new moon after the appearance of the signs of puberty, because the moon is believed to cause and have great influence upon the menstruation of women. It is performed every day until the following new moon, sometimes even still longer. At a *Káusima* dance which I witnessed the arrangement was as follows. The mother of the girl and some other elderly women formed a circle, or rather an elliptic ring, outside the hut where the girl was, each holding her rattling dancing -staff. Close to the ring four medicine-men were sitting at equal distances from one another, holding their rattle gourds (*pelite*). There were besides two more medicine-men standing up, each provided with a drum. During the dance the women moved round ceremoniously with slow, regular steps, chanting loudly and marking time with their rattle staffs which they struck on the ground. The men outside the ring also chanted, shaking

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The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter.

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *Mataco* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aitláh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men.

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*.

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat.

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *Mataco* and the *Choroti* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause

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this may be, it is now impossible to get a positive explanation from the Indians themselves as to their real motives for observing this ancient custom.

The dietary rules observed by the *Tobas* are in many respects more detailed than those of other Chaco tribes. I have mentioned for instance that when a girl reaches the age of puberty she is bound to fast strictly, being particularly forbidden to eat fish and meat. On the other hand, she is enjoined to eat the leaves of the tusca tree and the leaves and fruit of the vine which the Tobas call *charáde*. These leaves and fruit probably possess some magical properties which are believed to have beneficial effects upon the girl. Dobrizhoffer, speaking of the puberty customs of the ancient Abipones, mentions that the girl had to abstain from fish and meat and was only allowed to feed on »a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood». By this fruit he evidently meant the *tasi*-fruit (*charáde*) which is eaten on the same occasion by the Toba girls of the present day.

Among the Tobas and the Mataco, and probably also among the Choroti, a woman is always bound to diet during her menstrual periods, since she is at these periods more or less exposed to supernatural dangers. The Toba woman carefully abstains from eating fish, and her only food is a dish prepared of boiled maize and called *euóhi* in the Toba language. An infringement of these rules would be likely to bring about the terrible consequences which have been mentioned above. Similarly, when a child has been born in a family, both the father and the mother of the child must live on a restricted diet.

Again, after a Toba man has died, his widow, daughter, and other female relatives carefully avoid eating fish. If they infringe this rule, they will, according to the belief of the Tobas, sicken and die or go mad. Instead of fish, maize is eaten. Even some of the men observe the same custom, abstaining from fish for some time after the death of a relative.

All these food restrictions are, no doubt, based upon the same idea, namely, that evil spirits may hide in the forbidden food and gain entrance into the body if it is eaten. At any rate spirits are in some way associated with the food. With regard to the fish this is expressly stated. It is a curious fact that fish, which is the principal food of the Tobas, is so religiously shunned on certain occasions. Behind this superstition there are undoubtedly real experiences as to the harmful effects that the eating of fish may bring. Thus the Tobas assert that incautious

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

X539 X773 to get water they had to follow ropes to the river. There were heavy storms and hail stones hurled through the roofs and the wind blew huts away. Many people died.

7. The Sun (Pedro)

X539 X773 S21 The sun is a big medicine-man. When he is angry the world turns to darkness. The sun has two huts one of which he leaves in the morning. The other is situated on the side where he goes to sleep. Out of this hut a staircase of five hundred steps leads down under the ground. The sun always goes back to his starting point by an underground passage.

During the summer the days are long because the sun is an old man who walks slowly and with difficulty. It takes him a long time to make his trip. In the winter the sun is a boy who can run quickly. That is why the days are short.

When the sun makes his fire with *palo santo* wood it gets very hot on the earth. The sun is not, but he has a big fire and it is the heat from this fire which we feel on earth. In summer it is hot and the sun scorches the algarroba. When the algarroba is quite dry the sun unleashes a storm in order that the fruit may fall, then it becomes hot again for another harvest. The two harvests of the sun correspond to those of men. (Another explanation of heat is that somewhere very far away there is a big ship, like those on the Bermejo, and it is the smoke of these ships that is the heat.)

8. The Moon (Pedro)

The full moon is old, worn out and tired. Like old people, he walks slowly. When he gets very old he dies, then comes a storm. Afterwards he is born again. All men are the children of the moon. Before he dies he sends them a reminder. [841] That is why women menstruate when the moon dies.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

The moon is a great thief. He always steals something, cows in particular. Once the men got angry and wanted to kill him. The sun said, »I don't wish you to kill my friend but if you do I will go away.» The men were afraid and they let the moon eat the cows.

The moon had sexual intercourse with a woman. That is why women menstruate. From the intercourse of the moon with that woman a boy and girl were born. They were the first people.

If a woman dreams about an old man she will find that she is menstruating when she wakens. Her soul has had intercourse with the moon who is very old and looks like an old man. Each month when a woman is about to menstruate, she dreams about that old man.

9. Sun and Moon (Pedro)

The sun and the moon are friends. The sun helps and protects the moon. If anybody wants to kill the moon, the sun says, »He is my friend, I will kill you.» The sun went off to catch lice. He found white lice and gave some of them to the moon. The moon was not satisfied with these lice and said. »I am an expert in catching lice.» He went off, but he did'nt return. The sun said, »What is the matter with the moon?» He went to look for him. He found the moon very ill. One of the lice the moon had caught had bored a big hole in his head. The sun brought a comb, dressed his hair and the moon was well again. (VIII, p. 97).[1]

10. Why the Moon is Yellow (Pedro)

The sun wanted spears. He dived into a river and changed himself into a big yellow fish (*atsa*).[2] When the Indians saw this fish they tried to kill him with spears. The back of the

[1] Roman figures refer to the notes beginning on on p. 90.

[2] A *dorado* fish.

cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends. 756 821

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river. 823

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry. 821 535 534

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die. 881 841

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox. 821 787

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

IX. Storms

821 761 When a storm approaches with rain and thunder, little children's ears are to be covered each time the thunder crashes, otherwise Rain would take them under his arm and carry them away to his house. When such a thing happens, the child's body, which has remained on earth, becomes lean and white and all the food he takes is of no use. He visibly pines away, and it is not likely that a medicine-man can cure him. He will finally die without the cause of his death being known. The rain cannot do anything to grown-ups or big children, for it has not the strength to carry them away, [841] but it can harm menstruating women who happen to be out during a storm. Then they get very feeble.

X. Shooting Stars

821 781 Shooting stars foretell the death of someone. Meteors are stones thrown by the rain in order to fell the *quebracho*.

XI. Treatment of Snake Bites

752 825 When a serpent bites a man, it goes into the wound and climbs up in his body. When a man's foot is bitten by a-snake the leg must be pressed starting from the thigh, squeezing down to the place where he has been bitten. In so doing, the snake which has already had time to enter the leg, is obliged to go down into the big toe where it rolls itself up, tired. The operation lasts from evening to dawn and when the sun appears the snake gets cramped and vanishes under the ground. Once the snake is out the medicine-man has to suck the wound, for the departing snake has left its skin inside the body of the victim. The patient is completely cured only when the last piece of skin left by the snake has been removed. Otherwise he remains sick, has a headache and gets thinner and thinner.

If the progress of the snake inside the body cannot be stopped, the animal may go up into the head and blind the victim. It also goes to the heart and after repeated bites

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

relatives of the patient) and three dancers. All wore rattles. 755

The medicine-men sang and blew on the patient, who shook the bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in one place and let their rattles jingle. The dancers then started to run from left to right and thus made a complete circle. For the second turn, when they arrived at the height of the sticks, they reversed and ran around in the opposite direction, then reversed again and so on. While the assistants were stamping their feet, singing and shaking their rattles, the medicine-men went on singing and blowing. The patient had not moved during the dance. After they had run around ten times, the dancers went to rest, smoke and talk with the assistants, but the medicine-men still blew and shook their rattles. The patient was still motionless. After a quarter of an hour the dance was resumed, this time to the accompaniment of the patient's bells and rattles which all present were shaking. All seemed to be rather happy. The ceremony was then over and they sat down to smoke. The sticks were removed and the ornaments taken off, first those of the medicine-men, then the assistants and dancers, and finally those of the patient. The patient returned quietly to his hut. 755 535

XV. Sexual Life

Before marriage nothing prevents young people from having a free sexual life. The girls paint their faces red if they have had sexual intercourse the preceding night. 836 302

In love affairs before marriage it is always the women who take the initiative. 836

If a man has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman his loins and head will ache. As for the woman, she is in no danger. 833 841

You must not sleep with a woman whose child has not yet cut any teeth for the woman will lose her mind and as the child cannot eat alone he will die. 834 828

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [824] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a super-natural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made [278] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes [824] add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranas" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

M 846 a few words to explain the custom with particular reference to the Chaco Indians. The primitive idea that a new-born child is especially exposed to supernatural dangers is not difficult to understand; like most savage customs it has an underlying stratum of reality. The child is naturally at the beginning of its existence in a delicate state, and as a matter of fact, the mortality among new-born children is terribly great in the Chaco as in other parts of South America where the natives live in a state of nature. The Indian from his standpoint cannot fail to ascribe such facts to supernatural causes, and therefore the ceremonies at birth assume to a great extent a magical or religious character, conjurations and similar rites playing a prominent rôle in them.

As I have already pointed out, the couvade practices are essentially founded on the idea that between the new-born child and both parents there exists an intimate connection so that everything that happens to the parents is also supposed to happen to the child. Now as far as the mother is concerned, it is not difficult to understand why primitive peoples have arrived at the belief in such an intimate connection between her and her new-born babe. Being keen observers they have undoubtedly noticed that while the mother suckles her child, her own physical and mental condition is to a certain degree reflected in her delicate offspring. VM 842 More enigmatical appears at first sight the firm conviction of the Indian as to a still more intimate connection or sympathy uniting the *father* with his new-born child. This curious idea is explained by the peculiar theory of conception which is held by the Indians. The primitive Indian does not know that the germ of the new being is in fact in the woman herself and that the man only fecundates it at the sexual act. He evidently believes that the seed springs from the man and that the rôle of the woman is limited to receiving and developing it during pregnancy, just as the earth receives the seeds planted into it and in due time brings forth the full-grown fruit. This is the idea which Professor von den Steinen found among the Xingu tribes, who regard the *man* as the bearer of the eggs, and consequently afterwards could identify the father and his new-born son, calling the child »the little father«. This idea is evidently general in South America, for instance in the Gran Chaco, and explains why the Indians consider the relationship existing between the father and his new-born son still closer than that existing between the child and its mother. T 842 There are indeed customs which so strongly emphasize the father's share in the generation of offspring, that the latter appears to be almost 847 wholly of the flesh and blood of its father. Thus among the Tobas there

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b) *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

843 A pregnant woman works but little, she most eat sufficient, but not too much, food. The child, still in the mother's womb, sucks the food absorbed by its father and mother and if they were to eat too much the child would get fat and would be unable to come out. The husband of an expectant mother must give up certain kinds or work. He cannot use a knife or an axe for the strokes of any cutting instrument might kill or wound the child. He must not wear boots lest the child's legs be crooked. If he keeps his hat on his head the skull of the child will be flat. He must not write with ink lest the child's face be covered with marks.

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Birth and Infancy

● 842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this is considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made

Funeral Rites

763 If the eyes of a dying person become fixed in a stare, his soul cannot escape and his agony is prolonged. That is why the Matacos cover the faces of the dying with a piece of cloth and knot it about the throat. This cloth often contributes to accelerate the end by asphyxiating them. Their rush to bury the dead is so great that it sometimes results in the interment of persons who are still alive.

764 The widow, her head shaved, is isolated in a corner of the hut, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain, or else she is placed in a small annex attached to the hut.

[762] Immediately after the death of a young man who had committed suicide in the village of San Patricio, his mother crouched on the earth, placed the dead boy's head on her knees and began to grieve for him, saying repeatedly the word "yos," "yos" (my son, my son). The father beat a drum, day and night in accompaniment of a dirge in which the expression "yos," "yos," was much in evidence. A group of women, under the direction of the mother who was shaking a rattle [18] executed a dance which consisted of little jumpy steps near the place where the corpse had been placed before the burial.

[587] A widower or a widow may marry again two or three months after their spouse's demise. The women excuse themselves by saying: "I had to eat, I need someone who will clothe me."

Burial up in a tree, as described by Enrique Palavecino, used at one time to be very common in the middle region of the Bemejo.

Belief in the Reality of Dreams

787 842 The missionary Barbrooke Grubb has given numerous examples of the belief of the Lengua Indians in the reality of dreams. I have myself collected a good many examples of this belief among the Tobas and Pilagas. Here is an anecdote which illustrates this attitude among the Matacos. A girl from the village of San Patricio woke up weeping one beautiful morning. When asked about the cause of her sorrow, she answered that she had dreamed that she had had sexual relations with a young man and was afraid of becoming pregnant... (Footnote: Sent from the Smithsonian Institute of Washington by the author, a corresponding member. Translated from the French by Dr. Fernando Márquez Miranda, also a member).

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognized is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

[587] Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both [589] morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. [682] Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 684 628 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

CHAPTER VI.

Birth customs.

M 843 Various customs are practised at the birth of a child, many of which are of a religious significance, their aim being to protect the new-born child and its mother against supernatural dangers. Both the ideas and the practices to which they give rise are much the same among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Tobas. As soon as the Indian woman feels herself to be pregnant she begins to observe certain rules with regard to her diet. She generally abstains from eating meat, contenting herself with maize and certain leaves. The Toba women during this time take particular T [843] care not to eat fish. and with other kinds of animal food she is cautious. Thus if she eats the paunch or the intestines of a cow she will fall ill and birth will be rendered more difficult. When the child arrives, it is washed M in water, the umbilical cord is cut off with a snail's shell and guarded for 844 some time with great care. If the cord were cut off with a knife, the child, it is believed, would soon die. No iron instrument must come in contact with the new-born babe. Again, the navel-string cut off must be guarded until the navel wound is perfectly healed. If it is thrown away prematurely, this would be the same as throwing away the life of the child, which would die in consequence. The umbilical cord, according to the idea of M the Indians, remains in some mysterious connection with the new-born [171] child. These ideas are found among all Pilcomayo tribes, but they seem to be common to all South American Indians living in a state of nature.

The rites and ceremonies taking place after the little one has arrived all depend on the belief of the Indians that there is a very intimate connection between the child and its mother, and that both of them are badly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits. Fully to understand them and the behaviour of the woman in child-bed we must first of all take into consideration that the Indian woman in general bears children with great

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3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLo̱t*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hap?ap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

114 down on the field, from the reports of excellent informants. They have been obtained in San Andres and Yuto, on the Pilcomayo river, and in San Patricio, on the river Bermejo.

Birth and Infancy

842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this is considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made

/217 cont./

Notes

753 755 843 1. This woman, who was about seven months pregnant, continued to carry enormous loads of dry wood, which provoked the illness to which she succumbed.

[761] 2. According to the opinion of the village, the death was due to the fact that she had become pregnant before her first child knew how to feed itself.

C 622
generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp.

C M 846
Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time.

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

M 595 [588] [847]
It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it.

M 844
The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always!

C M 832
Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them.

M 832
I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even

123
had been tormenting him for so long, and had extracted from his 755
body several pens and a pencil, under guise of which, they said,
the a'hot had been harming him.

[211] The women seem to be extraordinarily able as mid- 844 ●
wives. 759

With singular ability they wait for the critical moment of labor and then, raising and holding the mother-to-be they shake her and keep uttering their customary exorcisms until they are successful in their endeavors.

However, if one wishes to be in on an interesting spectacle 755
one must see an invalid getting the full treatment in a village.

One evening while I was camped near a tribe I became curious on hearing a great sound of voices and the repercussion of strong blows on the ground. As my relations with these Indians was of the very best I did not hesitate to go to see what was afoot. In the midst of the village, in a sort of central square, I saw a circle of black figures illuminated fitfully by the blaze of the fires; they were the squaws and men who were sitting on their heels smoking in silence. In the center of the circle, in a space of about eight meters, four robust men with ostrich feathers and timbrels at their ankles, wrists, waists and on their heads were running back and forth, with their hands raised, gesticulating wildly and rattling some gourds half filled with seeds which added to the noise. They ran about singing and howling, and one could see that they were panting and covered with sweat. They would straighten out their legs and pound the ground with the whole sole of their feet, and as they did this they would raise their voices in a mad, desperate way, with their arms on high, heads to one side and body curved over.

Alternately two of them would stop, crouch, move their heads rapidly from right to left and up and down, howl and blow and spit on the backs, legs, heads and mouths of two invalids who were seated in their midst.

The two sick men were suffering terribly from the a'hots which 753
had entered their bodies in the form of rheumatic pains, and the
witch doctors were attempting to drive them out with their infernal dance. This, it was understood, they would be unable to do until they managed, by means of their unbridled racing about and thumping, to tire and intimidate the a'hots who, with evil intent

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

CHAPTER VI.

Birth customs.

M 843 Various customs are practised at the birth of a child, many of which are of a religious significance, their aim being to protect the new-born child and its mother against supernatural dangers. Both the ideas and the practices to which they give rise are much the same among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Tobas. As soon as the Indian woman feels herself to be pregnant she begins to observe certain rules with regard to her diet. She generally abstains from eating meat, contenting herself with maize and certain leaves. T [843] The Toba women during this time take particular care not to eat fish. and with other kinds of animal food she is cautious. Thus if she eats the paunch or the intestines of a cow she will fall ill and birth will be rendered more difficult. When the child arrives, it is washed in water, the umbilical cord is cut off with a snail's shell and guarded for some time with great care. M 844 If the cord were cut off with a knife, the child, it is believed, would soon die. No iron instrument must come in contact with the new-born babe. Again, the navel-string cut off must be guarded until the navel wound is perfectly healed. If it is thrown away prematurely, this would be the same as throwing away the life of the child, which would die in consequence. The umbilical cord, according to the idea of the Indians, remains in some mysterious connection with the new-born M [171] child. These ideas are found among all Pilcomayo tribes, but they seem to be common to all South American Indians living in a state of nature.

The rites and ceremonies taking place after the little one has arrived all depend on the belief of the Indians that there is a very intimate connection between the child and its mother, and that both of them are badly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits. Fully to understand them and the behaviour of the woman in child-bed we must first of all take into consideration that the Indian woman in general bears children with great

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)193? SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M 844 ● C 844

ease, without suffering much pain. From the point of view of the savage it is of special importance that this should be so. As the *Choroti* explained the matter to me: if at the birth the woman is ill, this is due to her being possessed by an evil spirit, and the demon, owing to the close connection between mother and child, will also take possession of the latter causing it to fall ill and die. Hence the weakness and sickness from which possibly she is suffering must be concealed and reasoned away. The Choroti have a stereotyped phrase to express this: *lasīhe īse lóuet = lahse ihe, eis lóuet*, that is: »when the child is born, the mother is well». As a matter of fact, a few hours after the delivery the Choroti woman is seen to move about doing some small tasks in the house, fetching water, preparing food, and so on. In short, she acts as if she were quite hearty, thus deceiving herself, her relatives, and the evil spirits. But the curious thing is that among the Choroti the *father* of the child, seemingly instead of the mother, lies in bed, looks weak, fasts, and is attended by the women, in short, behaves just as if he were the person who had given birth to the child and were suffering pains. The precaution which the woman shares with her husband, in addition to abstaining from hard work, is that she has to diet. Like him she avoids meat, limiting her diet to boiled and mashed maize, the leaves of certain trees and certain other vegetables.

C 846

This is the custom generally known under the name of *la couvade* (»hatching») and which among the Choroti exists in its most typical form. The father remains lying in bed for five or six days, or *until the navel-wound of the child is perfectly healed*. The reason for this is quite obvious and was, besides, expressly pointed out to me by the Indians. The navel-wound may become a dangerous source of infection, and the new-born child is in its most delicate condition during the first days or until the navel-wound is healed.

M 846 171

Before I give further explanations of the ideas underlying the couvade practices I shall say a few words about the birth customs of the Mataco and the Tobas. These tribes do not practice couvade in the proper sense of the word, but they have the same ideas about an intimate connection existing between the new-born child and both parents.

M 846

What I have stated as to the birth customs of the Choroti also holds true of those of the *Mataco*, with the exception that the Mataco father does not actually lie in bed. He has nevertheless to take certain precautions, and the fact that he pretends to be in a delicate condition during the first critical days of his child's life is shown by the expression the Mataco use of him. He is said to have an *aſttah limpáh*, that is to say.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLo̱t*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hapʔap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

843 from a certain tuber which has been roasted and then ground in a mortar. The husband unties his belt and undoes the knot in his tie so that the umbilical cord not wrap itself about the child's neck.

844 Only on rare occasions are there any complications at birth. According to the observations of a medical missionary, Doctor Collins Smith, labor lasts about two [sic] hours for the first child and around four or five hours for the others. A delivery often gathers a numerous crowd, and the neighbors take up positions close to the woman who is in labor, without showing any particular interest, but ready to take part should it be necessary to render any assistance. Old women, greatly experienced, come to assist the woman in labor, especially if the delivery is a difficult one. These benevolent matrons [431] usually receive a gift--a goat or a piece of cloth--by way of payment for their trouble.

The pregnant woman who is about to deliver is placed on the thighs of one of these crones, who is seated cross-legged on the ground. She takes hold, with both hands, of a pole which is stuck vertically into the earth in front of her and grips it firmly as the pains become greater. Other informants have told me that women give birth to their babies in a squatting position directly onto the ground; but they confirmed the matter of the use of a rod or pole stuck into the earth. If the labor is difficult or longer than is usual, one of the matrons presses the body of the uterus with her hands as would a doctor wishing to expulse the plancenta mechanically. If the woman in labor is unable to keep her sitting position, she lies down in such a manner that one of the helpers may rest her knee against the perineum, while another woman massages her in the uterine region.

Any mishap which may occur in the process is [10] attributed to witchcraft or to the husband's negligence who may have violated one of the numerous "tabus" which he is obliged to observe.

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife. It is never cut before the appearance of the placenta, as a child's life is not complete until his placenta has been expelled. According to one of my informants [752] the navel wound is cauterized with an incandescent pumpkin stalk. If the placenta is long in coming, the women exert upon the abdomen the same type of pressure used to accelerate the baby's birth. The placenta is buried without any kind of ceremony. The umbilical cord is dried and put into a little leather bag in the shape of a rhomboid, which the child carries about his neck until he is ten years old.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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535
584

[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two [622] bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [844] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [585] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [847] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then [581] called *enutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter VII.

Abortion and infanticide.

The custom of infanticide has already been touched upon, and as a matter of fact it is found among all Chaco tribes. The Indians do not consider a new-born child an independent personality, and it is looked upon as being so entirely the property of the parents that these have full right to do with it what they like. If for some reason or other the parents do not like to keep it they can destroy it, and such cases are by no means rare. Still it is necessary to point out certain facts with regard to infanticide as practised by the Indians, since the custom has not seldom been misunderstood by Europeans. The Indians do not kill their children from a lack of natural parental feelings; on the contrary, it must be emphasized that the savage Indian loves his offspring just as tenderly as do civilized people. Further, the Indians do not kill normal children except in such comparatively rare cases as those mentioned in the last chapter. A regular custom of killing for instance new-born female children does not exist. Infanticide is mainly practised in the case of children who are born in some way abnormal or under abnormal circumstances. In the first place it is superstitious fear that induces the Indian to kill his children. According to the Indian idea monstrous or in some way deformed children, or children which in general are born very sickly, cannot have been conceived in a natural way; they must have come into being through the operation of a demon. Indian myths, to which I shall refer later on, have much to tell about women who became pregnant in a supernatural way, during bathing or otherwise, and in consequence gave birth, not to a human child, but to a monster. Such a monster is looked upon with horror and regarded as a most ominous thing not only for the family concerned but for the whole village. It is an evil spirit that is born in the midst of the Indians and which will visit the whole community with sick-

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco S17
Toba S112

ness and misfortune. Thus the Choroti expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *möhsek* (spirit), and they therefore generally kill the child at once. The Mataco call their evil spirits *aittáh* and regard a monster as an *aittáh* personified. Similarly the Tobas believe that a sick child is possessed by a demon (*peyák*), or is itself such a demon, and owing to the close connection which there is between the child and its parents, this may entail unfortunate consequences for the parents also, nay, for the whole tribe.

Father Cardús relates that when among the Tobas a woman dies in child-birth, the new-born child is buried alive with its mother's body [1]). I do not believe that such a custom is practised by the Tobas of to-day, but it may well have existed formerly. A woman who dies in childbirth is always regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear, since the accident is explained as an operation of evil spirits to which the woman has fallen a victim. But the new-born child with its mother forms, as it were, one single personality; consequently the child also is regarded as being possessed. Besides, a sucking child which is bereft of its mother is also left without nutrition since, according to Indian ideas, a new-born babe can only be nourished with the milk of its own mother, and would thus die in any case.

We may of course also assume that practical considerations have led the Indians to infanticide. The Indians understand that a sickly or deformed child has scarcely any chance of developing into a strong man and a useful member of society. In the hard struggle for existence under which the Indian lives it may even be merciful to destroy him. I believe however that such considerations play only a subordinate part in the custom of infanticide, which must first of all be explained by superstition.

The same custom prevails with regard to *twins*. Among all tribes the second is generally killed. The birth of twins is among all Pilcomayo tribes looked upon as an unnatural and most ominous thing, since the Indians consider that one man cannot become the father of two children at once. The second, consequently, must be the offspring either of another man or of an evil spirit. Besides, the Indians say that a woman has not sufficient milk to nourish two babes at the same time, and from this point of view also twins are regarded as unlucky. The Indian woman, who has to work hard, is anxious not to bear more children than she is able to nourish and to take care of. In a Choroti family three or four

[1]) Cardús *op. cit.* p. 263.

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To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLǫt*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

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d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

852 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

853 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances towards a Spanish woman. . . .

"Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain respect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new 791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance, 776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a ● 846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which [753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp. C 622

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time. C M 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. M 595 [588] [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always! M 844

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them. C M 832

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even M 832

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)193? SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M 844 C 844

ease, without suffering much pain. From the point of view of the savage it is of special importance that this should be so. As the *Choroti* explained the matter to me: if at the birth the woman is ill, this is due to her being possessed by an evil spirit, and the demon, owing to the close connection between mother and child, will also take possession of the latter causing it to fall ill and die. Hence the weakness and sickness from which possibly she is suffering must be concealed and reasoned away. The Choroti have a stereotyped phrase to express this: *lasihe ise lóuet = lahse ihe, eis lóuet*, that is: »when the child is born, the mother is well». As a matter of fact, a few hours after the delivery the Choroti woman is seen to move about doing some small tasks in the house, fetching water, preparing food, and so on. In short, she acts as if she were quite hearty, thus deceiving herself, her relatives, and the evil spirits. But the curious thing is that among the Choroti the *father* of the child, seemingly instead of the mother, lies in bed, looks weak, fasts, and is attended by the women, in short, behaves just as if he were the person who had given birth to the child and were suffering pains. The precaution which the woman shares with her husband, in addition to abstaining from hard work, is that she has to diet. Like him she avoids meat, limiting her diet to boiled and mashed maize, the leaves of certain trees and certain other vegetables.

C 846

This is the custom generally known under the name of *la couvade* (»hatching») and which among the Choroti exists in its most typical form. The father remains lying in bed for five or six days, or *until the navel-wound of the child is perfectly healed*. The reason for this is quite obvious and was, besides, expressly pointed out to me by the Indians. The navel-wound may become a dangerous source of infection, and the new-born child is in its most delicate condition during the first days or until the navel-wound is healed.

M 846 171

Before I give further explanations of the ideas underlying the couvade practices I shall say a few words about the birth customs of the Mataco and the Tobas. These tribes do not practice couvade in the proper sense of the word, but they have the same ideas about an intimate connection existing between the new-born child and both parents.

M 846

What I have stated as to the birth customs of the Choroti also holds true of those of the *Mataco*, with the exception that the Mataco father does not actually lie in bed. He has nevertheless to take certain precautions, and the fact that he pretends to be in a delicate condition during the first critical days of his child's life is shown by the expression the Mataco use of him. He is said to have an *aíttah limpáh*, that is to say.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba 5/12

M 846 »to be a little sick», which means that he has to be cautious with regard to his work and his diet, just like his wife. Any heavy work, hunting, fishing, the touching of iron instruments, is prohibited to the father, since otherwise his delicate son might fall ill and die. Fasting is likewise obligatory for both of them. The Mataco say of both parents: *uenhitātāk, yil vuh. i.e.*, »they do not eat, there are many demons of death» (moving about and threatening especially the child, but also the parents themselves). A light vegetable food, mainly consisting of boiled and mashed maize, is prescribed for both of them.

When the confined woman has been delivered, her ventral parts must be well covered to protect her against evil spirits which might do her harm. In the evening drums are beaten to keep off the same supernatural, malicious powers. If the woman is the wife of a great chief, a special dance is performed which the Mataco call *Katináh* and which takes place at great feasts celebrated by the whole village community. Like all other dances of the Mataco, the *Katináh* is in its character ceremonial or a sort of conjuration by which evil spirits are kept off or made harmless.

M [622 535]

T 846 622 Among the *Tobas*, just as in part among the Mataco, the ceremonies which are performed and the precautions taken are more elaborate when the mother is the wife of a great chief. Even some time before birth takes place the woman, as we have already seen, has to observe certain rules in regard to her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish. As soon as the woman has been delivered her body must be well covered, for otherwise, I was told, the evil spirits may enter into her and kill both her and her new-born babe. The danger is particularly great at night. Therefore the Indians assemble in great numbers outside the chief's house, chanting the whole night, accompanying themselves with their rattle-gourds and drinking great quantities of algaroba beer. In the day the young men perform the dance *Nomí*. During the first days the woman does not leave the house, and although she is not ill she remains completely inactive. She likewise continues to fast, eating neither fish nor meat and living solely on maize and certain leaves. — The above ceremonies are performed, and the rules of diet are observed, during five days, or until the navel-wound of the child is completely healed.

T 846 Much the same ceremonies are performed when the mother is a woman of ordinary rank, with the exception that the father of the new-born child alone chants to his rattle the first evening after the birth; and the dance *Nomí* does not take place. The happy event is always celebrated by an algaroba drinking-bout. The mother does not stay in bed and

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

does not seem to be ill, but she abstains from any work during the five critical days and goes on dieting, particularly avoiding fish.

All these customs are based upon the belief that, at the moment of birth and during the first days afterwards, both the new-born child and the mother are particularly exposed to the attacks of the evil spirits, called *peyák*. These demons are believed to arrive in great numbers in the form of snakes — a special kind of snake existing in the country of the Tobas — but invisible, and with every breath of wind try to enter the house and penetrate into the woman with the consequence that, if they succeed in doing so, both the mother and the child will fall ill and die. The chanting and the shaking of the rattles at night and the dancing in the day-time, just as the precaution to cover the woman, have for their object the protection of the mother and child and to keep off the evil spirits. Similarly, the drinking of algaroba beer is on this occasion of a ceremonial character, as we shall see later on.

Not only the mother, however, but also the father of the child has to observe certain precautionary rules especially in regard to his diet. The custom of »couvade», at any rate nowadays, only exists among the Tobas in a modified form. According to what the Indians themselves told me they formerly practised this custom almost as strictly as the Choroti do still, the father being obliged to lie inactive in his bed for many days, strictly fasting. In our days the Toba father does not observe a real couvade, in so far as he does not keep to his bed. He merely abstains from doing hard work and avoids certain kinds of food, because they are believed in some way to influence unfavourably the health of his new-born child. Thus for instance, if he eats the head of a cow his little son will soon die. Similarly he must be cautious in eating fish. His principal food during the critical days consists of maize and certain fruits. These rules are observed for about one week. That the first days are considered so critical, is due to ideas which we already found among the Choroti and Mataco. When among the Tobas I asked the father of a new-born child how long he had to keep the rules of couvade, he pointed to the navel of his son, meaning to say that as soon as the navel was all right the danger was passed. It is believed that evil spirits might enter into the child by the navel-wound and kill it.

In my work *The Civilization of the South American Indians* I have tried to describe the ideas underlying the custom of couvade, which in South America is practised by most tribes in one form or another. Whilst referring the reader to this work for further details, I shall here only add

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

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846 a few words to explain the custom with particular reference to the Chaco Indians. The primitive idea that a new-born child is especially exposed to supernatural dangers is not difficult to understand; like most savage customs it has an underlying stratum of reality. The child is naturally at the beginning of its existence in a delicate state, and as a matter of fact, the mortality among new-born children is terribly great in the Chaco as in other parts of South America where the natives live in a state of nature. The Indian from his standpoint cannot fail to ascribe such facts to supernatural causes, and therefore the ceremonies at birth assume to a great extent a magical or religious character, conjurations and similar rites playing a prominent rôle in them.

As I have already pointed out, the couvade practices are essentially founded on the idea that between the new-born child and both parents there exists an intimate connection so that everything that happens to the parents is also supposed to happen to the child. Now as far as the mother is concerned, it is not difficult to understand why primitive peoples have arrived at the belief in such an intimate connection between her and her new-born babe. Being keen observers they have undoubtedly noticed that while the mother suckles her child, her own physical and
M mental condition is to a certain degree reflected in her delicate offspring.
842 More enigmatical appears at first sight the firm conviction of the Indian as to a still more intimate connection or sympathy uniting the *father* with his new-born child. This curious idea is explained by the peculiar theory of conception which is held by the Indians. The primitive Indian does not know that the germ of the new being is in fact in the woman herself and that the man only fecundates it at the sexual act. He evidently believes that the seed springs from the man and that the rôle of the woman is limited to receiving and developing it during pregnancy, just as the earth receives the seeds planted into it and in due time brings forth the full-grown fruit. This is the idea which Professor von den Steinen found among the Xingu tribes, who regard the *man* as the bearer of the eggs, and consequently afterwards could identify the father and his new-born son, calling the child »the little father». This idea is evidently general in South America, for instance in the Gran Chaco, and explains why the Indians consider the relationship existing between the father and his new-
T born son still closer than that existing between the child and its mother.
842 There are indeed customs which so strongly emphasize the father's
847 share in the generation of offspring, that the latter appears to be almost wholly of the flesh and blood of its father. Thus among the Tobas there

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prevails the custom that a man simply kills the child of his married daughter if his son-in-law has incurred his displeasure; and all Chaco women kill their new-born babes if they have been abandoned by their husbands and, in general, when the father is unknown. Similarly an Indian woman as a rule kills the child she bears to a white man directly after it is born, if not before. Such customs no doubt assume the recognition of a very intimate relationship between the child and its father. The child is part

Young Toba Indian outside his house. Bolivian Chaco.

and parcel of the father, or rather, *is* the father. Hence, if the woman is displeased with her husband and has broken all relations with him, she destroys the child she has born him.

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According to the idea of the Indians the father with his new-born child forms as it were one single personality, and everything which happens to the father during the critical days is supposed to affect his little son directly. The rules which the former has to observe concern first of all the food. If the father eats some unsuitable food, this — as the Indians told me — would be just the same as if his delicate son ate the same food and the consequences would prove fatal to the latter. The situation remains critical as long as the navel-wound is not perfectly healed. If, at birth, complications of any kind ensue with the new-born child or with

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

the mother, these are at once set down as the operation of evil spirits. The parents, especially the father, are released from the restriction laid upon them by custom as soon as the child is assumed to have become independent of the physical and mental constitution of its parents.

Among the Chaco Indians, there does not exist any ceremonies corresponding to our baptism, but a *name* is always given the new-born child. The Chaco Indians name their children after animals, birds, reptiles (for instance Bird, Alligator, Lizard), or after bodily peculiarities observed in the child (for instance: Tsĭhnilak, »Paunchy», a Choroti name), but the names seem on the whole to be given at random and not with the same discrimination which is the rule among some Indians of tropical South America. There is however one peculiar feature to be noted in this respect: the reluctance generally displayed by the Indians to mention their real names. I very rarely heard the Indians using each other's names in their daily conversations, and if one wished to find out the name of a certain Indian, this was as a rule extremely difficult. When a Choroti, a Mataco, or a Toba went to the settlements of the whites to work, he usually assumed a special European name for that time. Such names they never had any objection to mentioning, but they were extremely unwilling to tell me their proper native names. Only on certain occasions — for instance, at the drinking-feasts when all were in high spirits and very good friends — did it happen that the Indians told me one another's names. The native name, received in early childhood, is the real name and is to a certain degree taboo. To reveal it is a perilous thing, especially if the individual *himself* does it. It is to put oneself wholly in the power of an unknown stranger and wilfully to expose oneself to mysterious dangers.

As we shall find later on, the names of the *dead* are particularly taboo.

845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

852 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child. The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp. C 622

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time. C M 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. M 595 [588] [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always! M 844

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them. C M 832

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even M 832

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which even in the most favorable physical circumstances can occur quite often among children who are the offspring of parents who are too closely consanguineous. Marriages of this type (between close relatives) are not rare here, and -- this is not just an extra trip bearing grist for my mill -- I have been assured that of the very small number of defective persons these latter, the deaf-mute, are the least rare among the Indians of these parts; among whom, let it be said, I have not seen a single cretin or cotudo [coto is a malignant swelling of the throat -- Translator] and that in spite of the fact that aberrants of this type abound in the north and western part of the Republic.

To come back to my deaf-mute: The occasion of my meeting him was brought about by his having been attacked by a tiger [jaguar--Translator] which mauled him horribly while he was gathering firewood. (This is one further proof as to the difficulty of putting up a successful struggle for life in these waste places if one is not in the full possession of all one's senses). We were called to treat the poor wretch, but he refused our ministrations energetically, preferring to put himself in the hands of the witch doctors.

Despite what I have stated above, the Indians themselves [847] have assured me that it sometimes [222] happens that a mother will allow her children to die if their father or any other man who will care for them dies or goes away.

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However, this must happen only very seldom (and does not weaken our argument regarding the handicapped) for among the inhabitants of a given village and particularly between relatives there exists a truly charming sharing of goods -- yet when food is scarce one may suppose that the phenomenon is more common. But such a state of food scarcity is probably felt less owing to the great variety of foods acceptable to the Indians and their really remarkable adaptability to the availability of food: they can live on a very skimpy diet when need arises, and then gorge themselves with a vengeance when they hit a time of plenty.

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The elasticity of the stomachs of these savages is truly extraordinary. When not on the march a mouthful of food is enough for them; while fresh air, the exertions of the hunt, of fishing, of harvesting and of traveling in pursuit of these activities

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

CHAPTER IV.

Courtship and marriage.

A salient feature in the social life of all Chaco tribes, and one in which they differ considerably from the tribes whom I learned to know in tropical South America, is the great sexual liberty allowed to young people before marriage. As soon as a girl has passed her first menstruation she is considered free to choose for herself occasional lovers, and generally she does not delay in making use of this right. This free sexual life is particularly indulged in during the algaroba season, in connection with the feasts and dances which then take place. The girls avoid the natural consequences of this sexual license by abortion or infanticide, customs which are also approved by the social morality of the Chaco Indians. Having enjoyed this free life for some years, the girl ultimately decides to marry, and then as a rule becomes a faithful wife as long as the husband does not himself neglect his duties towards her. This general state of things is met with all along the Pilcomayo, although customs of course differ to some extent in different tribes. I shall first relate the customs practised among the Choroti in courtship and marriage.

The *Choroti* are a strictly monogamous people. During my stay among the different Choroti tribes I never found a single case of polygamy, and I was moreover able to confirm that polygamy is strongly disapproved of by custom and the social morality of the people. It is first of all rendered impossible by the jealousy of the women who, as I have mentioned before, have a decisive influence in matters of love and take the first step towards contracting marriage.

Courtship therefore among the Choroti assumes rather a peculiar form, inasmuch as the girls play the active, and the young men the passive part. Marriages are as a rule contracted during the algaroba season from November to March, when there is a good supply of food in the villages and

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter VII.

Abortion and infanticide.

The custom of infanticide has already been touched upon, and as a matter of fact it is found among all Chaco tribes. The Indians do not consider a new-born child an independent personality, and it is looked upon as being so entirely the property of the parents that these have full right to do with it what they like. If for some reason or other the parents do not like to keep it they can destroy it, and such cases are by no means rare. Still it is necessary to point out certain facts with regard to infanticide as practised by the Indians, since the custom has not seldom been misunderstood by Europeans. The Indians do not kill their children from a lack of natural parental feelings; on the contrary, it must be emphasized that the savage Indian loves his offspring just as tenderly as do civilized people. Further, the Indians do not kill normal children except in such comparatively rare cases as those mentioned in the last chapter. A regular custom of killing for instance new-born female children does not exist. Infanticide is mainly practised in the case of children who are born in some way abnormal or under abnormal circumstances. In the first place it is superstitious fear that induces the Indian to kill his children. According to the Indian idea monstrous or in some way deformed children, or children which in general are born very sickly, cannot have been conceived in a natural way; they must have come into being through the operation of a demon. Indian myths, to which I shall refer later on, have much to tell about women who became pregnant in a supernatural way, during bathing or otherwise, and in consequence gave birth, not to a human child, but to a monster. Such a monster is looked upon with horror and regarded as a most ominous thing not only for the family concerned but for the whole village. It is an evil spirit that is born in the midst of the Indians and which will visit the whole community with sick-

847 [858] 845

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112

ness and misfortune. Thus the Choroti expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *möhsek* (spirit), and they therefore generally kill the child at once. The Mataco call their evil spirits *aittáh* and regard a monster as an *aittáh* personified. Similarly the Tobas believe that a sick child is possessed by a demon (*peyák*), or is itself such a demon, and owing to the close connection which there is between the child and its parents, this may entail unfortunate consequences for the parents also, nay, for the whole tribe.

Father Cardús relates that when among the Tobas a woman dies in child-birth, the new-born child is buried alive with its mother's body [1]). I do not believe that such a custom is practised by the Tobas of to-day, but it may well have existed formerly. A woman who dies in childbirth is always regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear, since the accident is explained as an operation of evil spirits to which the woman has fallen a victim. But the new-born child with its mother forms, as it were, one single personality; consequently the child also is regarded as being possessed. Besides, a sucking child which is bereft of its mother is also left without nutrition since, according to Indian ideas, a new-born babe can only be nourished with the milk of its own mother, and would thus die in any case.

We may of course also assume that practical considerations have led the Indians to infanticide. The Indians understand that a sickly or deformed child has scarcely any chance of developing into a strong man and a useful member of society. In the hard struggle for existence under which the Indian lives it may even be merciful to destroy him. I believe however that such considerations play only a subordinate part in the custom of infanticide, which must first of all be explained by superstition.

The same custom prevails with regard to *twins*. Among all tribes the second is generally killed. The birth of twins is among all Pilcomayo tribes looked upon as an unnatural and most ominous thing, since the Indians consider that one man cannot become the father of two children at once. The second, consequently, must be the offspring either of another man or of an evil spirit. Besides, the Indians say that a woman has not sufficient milk to nourish two babes at the same time, and from this point of view also twins are regarded as unlucky. The Indian woman, who has to work hard, is anxious not to bear more children than she is able to nourish and to take care of. In a Choroti family three or four

[1]) Cardús *op. cit.* p. 263.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

In a Chenti family three or four children, arriving at intervals of two or three years, seemed to me to be the rule. Among the Tobas and the Mataco the children were somewhat more numerous, especially in families where the man had two or more wives. Whether the matter is or is not arranged by abortion, I cannot say. 163

Abortion is practised by unmarried women who become pregnant in consequence of their sexual licentiousness. I have never seen unmarried women with children in any tribe. Married women also have recourse to feticide or infanticide when they have been abandoned by their husbands. Similarly, as I have stated before, a Toba man may kill the newborn child of his married daughter if his son-in-law has incurred his dislike. 847.

Abortions are effected by the Chaco women by mechanical treatment. The woman kills the foetus by beating her abdomen and after that presses it out with her thumbs. She may perform the operation herself or be aided by some old woman. This is done fairly early, generally in the third or fourth month of pregnancy. The operation is said to cause the woman some pain, but does not seriously affect her health. Poisonous drugs or other abortive means are not used by the Chaco Indians.

If the Indians find nothing immoral in infanticide, this of course is still less the case with abortion. It is wholly a private affair of the woman or of her family, with which the community as such does not interfere. A feticide certainly does not cause her more remorse than the extraction of a tooth. Custom is very strict on this point, not only among the Chaco tribes but among all South American Indians.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLọt*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hapʔap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

855 and carry on, his mother essayed to see whether dragging him off to some distance from the hut would help, but he struggled and rolled on the ground. Finally she controlled him and, without any short temperedness, and laughing all the time she set him down a few yards from the house where the child continued to cry but did not dare to return.

857 861 This same gentleness and absence of brutality can be observed among playing children. Thus, on numerous occasions I have been able to observe little children vying for possession of a small ball; they would push and charge into each other, but never maliciously or violently. Mataco education stresses sweetness and gentleness and a [157] violent man or one of evil character (witsax) [? Translator] inspires them with fear and disgust. From the tenderest age children learn to share their food. When I used to distribute candy the children would never fail to let the absent ones know so that they might have a part of what was being given.

Abortion and Infanticide

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Marriage

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [844] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [585] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [847] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then [581] called *anutsha tahnayéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

forced the already uncounscious patients to swallow salt water and so to vomit the poison, but as soon as they came to themselves they struggled against the missionary in their will to die. Their resistance to care was overcome only with the help of several other persons. Both of them recovered but remained depressed for a long time afterwards.

Shortly after these events the deserted wife gave birth to a boy. She evinced no interest in the baby and wanted to kill him. The child's grandmother and other relatives, especially the women, opposed her intention and brought the baby to the missionary who tried without decided to resort to bribery and laid before the mother cloth and corn from the store, which he promised to give her if she suckled the baby. To this temptation the woman finally yielded. As soon as she had suckled the boy his life was safe, for a woman never kills an infant once she has nursed it.

Sixth case. Here the main character in the drama was Ipatsi, a 17 year old girl. She was an orphan whose sole relative in the village was a classificatory grandmother. She and her husband (25 years old) were incongenial and quarreled almost constantly. Then one day she poisoned herself. Her grandmother, who noticed the effects of the sachasandia late the same evening, sent a child to inform the missionary in charge. He arrived soon afterwards and found the girl conscious but very weak. She was crying hysterically. A few women who were standing nearby watched the scene in a detached way. Her husband sat on the edge of the bed, but seemed sulky and indifferent to her plight. Thanks to an emetic, she recovered. A few days later she departed from the her husband, despite the fact that she had given birth to a child.

Seventh case. Bertie, a boy of 14, ate sachasandia three times in one week and each time was saved by the missionary. He himself gave the following explanation for his attempted suicide. Teresa, whose case was described above, had cast her eyes upon him although he was distantly related to her. The boy's father encouraged her and insisted that Bertie marry her although he showed the greatest reluctance and insisted that he was still a child. Neither the girl nor his father would listen to him so that the boy had no peace and "could not sleep at night". At last he took poison. His plight aroused little sympathy except in his elder sister and, of course, in Teresa. The father died soon after the attempted suicide and so Bertie did not have to marry Teresa.

Eight case. The victim was a boy of 16 whose bright and cheerful disposition made him generally popular. He had joined the mission

avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

the mother, these are at once set down as the operation of evil spirits. The parents, especially the father, are released from the restriction laid upon them by custom as soon as the child is assumed to have become independent of the physical and mental constitution of its parents.

Among the Chaco Indians, there does not exist any ceremonies corresponding to our baptism, but a *name* is always given the new-born child. The Chaco Indians name their children after animals, birds, reptiles (for instance Bird, Alligator, Lizard), or after bodily peculiarities observed in the child (for instance: Tsihnilak, »Paunchy», a Choroti name), but the names seem on the whole to be given at random and not with the same discrimination which is the rule among some Indians of tropical South America. There is however one peculiar feature to be noted in this respect: the reluctance generally displayed by the Indians to mention their real names. I very rarely heard the Indians using each other's names in their daily conversations, and if one wished to find out the name of a certain Indian, this was as a rule extremely difficult. When a Choroti, a Mataco, or a Toba went to the settlements of the whites to work, he usually assumed a special European name for that time. Such names they never had any objection to mentioning, but they were extremely unwilling to tell me their proper native names. Only on certain occasions — for instance, at the drinking-feasts when all were in high spirits and very good friends — did it happen that the Indians told me one another's names. The native name, received in early childhood, is the real name and is to a certain degree taboo. To reveal it is a perilous thing, especially if the individual *himself* does it. It is to put oneself wholly in the power of an unknown stranger and wilfully to expose oneself to mysterious dangers.

As we shall find later on, the names of the *dead* are particularly taboo.

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

595 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S/12

ness and misfortune. Thus the Choroti expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *möhsek* (spirit), and they therefore generally kill the child at once. The Mataco call their evil spirits *aitták* and regard a monster as an *aitták* personified. Similarly the Tobas believe that a sick child is possessed by a demon (*peyák*), or is itself such a demon, and owing to the close connection which there is between the child and its parents, this may entail unfortunate consequences for the parents also, nay, for the whole tribe.

Father Cardús relates that when among the Tobas a woman dies in child-birth, the new-born child is buried alive with its mother's body[1]). I do not believe that such a custom is practised by the Tobas of to-day, but it may well have existed formerly. A woman who dies in childbirth is always regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear, since the accident is explained as an operation of evil spirits to which the woman has fallen a victim. But the new-born child with its mother forms, as it were, one single personality; consequently the child also is regarded as being possessed. Besides, a sucking child which is bereft of its mother is also left without nutrition since, according to Indian ideas, a new-born babe can only be nourished with the milk of its own mother, and would thus die in any case.

We may of course also assume that practical considerations have led the Indians to infanticide. The Indians understand that a sickly or deformed child has scarcely any chance of developing into a strong man and a useful member of society. In the hard struggle for existence under which the Indian lives it may even be merciful to destroy him. I believe however that such considerations play only a subordinate part in the custom of infanticide, which must first of all be explained by superstition.

The same custom prevails with regard to *twins*. Among all tribes the second is generally killed. The birth of twins is among all Pilcomayo tribes looked upon as an unnatural and most ominous thing, since the Indians consider that one man cannot become the father of two children at once. The second, consequently, must be the offspring either of another man or of an evil spirit. Besides, the Indians say that a woman has not sufficient milk to nourish two babes at the same time, and from this point of view also twins are regarded as unlucky. The Indian woman, who has to work hard, is anxious not to bear more children than she is able to nourish and to take care of. In a Choroti family three or four

[1]) Cardús *op. cit.* p. 263.

845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana. All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child. In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

853 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert. When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child. The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
● 854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

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Chapter VIII.

Education of children. Puberty ceremonies.

855 In the last chapter I have pointed out that infanticide, as practised by the Chaco Indians in certain cases, cannot be explained as a token of a lack of parental feeling in general. The Indian parents love their children, feed them well and try to protect them not only against natural dangers but also against evil spirits by means of body-painting and amulets. To what extent they take care of the well-being of their offspring is best shown by the custom of couvade. Even at those times of the year when the food is scarce I do not believe that the Indians allow their children to suffer from hunger. At the algaroba
855 season again, when there is an abundance of food, the children go on
261 eating from morning till night, and since the food to a great extent consists of fruits more or less indigestible, it is at that time a common thing to see young children of both sexes whose stomachs are abnormally distended so as to make them really paunchy. Gluttony is a characteristic feature of the Chaco Indians during the seasons, but especially of the children.

855 The Chaco Indians bring up their children in complete liberty. Pa-
861 rents are never seen punishing their children for disobedience or faults committed. This is partly due to the fact that the sense of what is proper and permissible is not developed among the Indians in the same way as in civilized societies. The Indian hates restraint and fetters of any kind, he wants to be free and independent himself and grants his children the same liberty. The latter, on the other hand, from an Indian point of view very seldom appear punishable, since they easily accommodate themselves to the customs and moral views of the tribe. An Indian boy may rob or do some other harm to a stranger, be he an Indian of a foreign tribe or a white man, but he will, from a natural instinct, respect the property of a

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

855 861 868 member of his own tribe. In the training of the Indian children the power of example and the natural desire to imitate has the most effect. It is interesting to note how the young boys constantly watch the occupations of the elder men and how easily in this way they acquire the necessary skill in the same occupations, above all in fishing and hunting. When the Toba boy is about six or seven years old, his father makes him a small bow and arrows with which he frequently practises shooting, thus at an early age acquiring dexterity in managing the weapon. Similarly the girls follow their mothers everywhere, down to the river, to the fields, and the forest, keenly watching how she does her work and soon learning to do the same.

881 As far as I know, no particular ceremonies are performed among the Choroti and Mataco with young boys at the attainment of puberty, nor do the present day Tobas in Bolivia practise any ceremonies of this kind. According to some ancient writers, the Tobas of the 18th century practised certain ceremonies with young boys, consisting of a peculiar arrangement of their hair and in pricking them on the body with sharp-pointed bones, but since the particular purpose of these ceremonies was to initiate them into the profession of a warrior, I shall reserve the details till later on, in treating of Indian warfare.

On the other hand, when a young girl has her first menstruation and becomes marriageable, the incident is celebrated among all Chaco tribes with certain feasts, dances, beer-drinking, and purely religious rites. In order fully to understand these ceremonies it is necessary to know the ideas which the Indians entertain about the mysterious phenomena of puberty. It is by no means sufficient to say that the puberty ceremonies simply serve to initiate the girl into her coming sexual life; their significance is much deeper.

881 941 [821] The physiological process which causes the menstruation of the women, incomprehensible as it seems to the Indian, strikes him as something extremely mysterious and must needs give rise to certain superstitious beliefs. Thus both the Tobas and the other Chaco tribes seem to have the idea that this strange phenomenon is caused, or at any rate influenced, by the new moon. Moreover, since the menstrual periods, and especially the first menses, are as a rule connected with certain nervous disorders and other alterations in the physical condition of the woman, it is naturally thought that during these critical days she is seriously exposed to the influence of evil spirits. At the same time, of course, owing to the awakening sexual desire, the relationship between this physiological

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Chapter VII.

Abortion and infanticide.

The custom of infanticide has already been touched upon, and as a matter of fact it is found among all Chaco tribes. The Indians do not consider a new-born child an independent personality, and it is looked upon as being so entirely the property of the parents that these have full right to do with it what they like. If for some reason or other the parents do not like to keep it they can destroy it, and such cases are by no means rare. Still it is necessary to point out certain facts with regard to infanticide as practised by the Indians, since the custom has not seldom been misunderstood by Europeans. The Indians do not kill their children from a lack of natural parental feelings; on the contrary, it must be emphasized that the savage Indian loves his offspring just as tenderly as do civilized people. Further, the Indians do not kill normal children except in such comparatively rare cases as those mentioned in the last chapter. A regular custom of killing for instance new-born female children does not exist. Infanticide is mainly practised in the case of children who are born in some way abnormal or under abnormal circumstances. In the first place it is superstitious fear that induces the Indian to kill his children. According to the Indian idea monstrous or in some way deformed children, or children which in general are born very sickly, cannot have been conceived in a natural way; they must have come into being through the operation of a demon. Indian myths, to which I shall refer later on, have much to tell about women who became pregnant in a supernatural way, during bathing or otherwise, and in consequence gave birth, not to a human child, but to a monster. Such a monster is looked upon with horror and regarded as a most ominous thing not only for the family concerned but for the whole village. It is an evil spirit that is born in the midst of the Indians and which will visit the whole community with sick-

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6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsble for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter VIII.

Education of children. Puberty ceremonies.

855 In the last chapter I have pointed out that infanticide, as practised by the Chaco Indians in certain cases, cannot be explained as a token of a lack of parental feeling in general. The Indian parents love their children, feed them well and try to protect them not only against natural dangers but also against evil spirits by means of body-painting and amulets. To what extent they take care of the well-being of their offspring is best shown by the custom of couvade. Even at those times of the year when the food is scarce I do not believe that the Indians allow their children to suffer from hunger. At the algaroba 855 season again, when there is an abundance of food, the children go on 261 eating from morning till night, and since the food to a great extent consists of fruits more or less indigestible, it is at that time a common thing to see young children of both sexes whose stomachs are abnormally distended so as to make them really paunchy. Gluttony is a characteristic feature of the Chaco Indians during the seasons, but especially of the children.

855 The Chaco Indians bring up their children in complete liberty. Parents are never seen punishing their children for disobedience or faults 861 committed. This is partly due to the fact that the sense of what is proper and permissible is not developed among the Indians in the same way as in civilized societies. The Indian hates restraint and fetters of any kind, he wants to be free and independent himself and grants his children the same liberty. The latter, on the other hand, from an Indian point of view very seldom appear punishable, since they easily accommodate themselves to the customs and moral views of the tribe. An Indian boy may rob or do some other harm to a stranger, be he an Indian of a foreign tribe or a white man, but he will, from a natural instinct, respect the property of a

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

855 member of his own tribe. In the training of the Indian children the power of example and the natural desire to imitate has the most effect. It is
●861 interesting to note how the young boys constantly watch the occupations of the elder men and how easily in this way they acquire the necessary
868 skill in the same occupations, above all in fishing and hunting. When the Toba boy is about six or seven years old, his father makes him a small bow and arrows with which he frequently practises shooting, thus at an early age acquiring dexterity in managing the weapon. Similarly the girls follow their mothers everywhere, down to the river, to the fields, and the forest, keenly watching how she does her work and soon learning to do the same.

881 As far as I know, no particular ceremonies are performed among the Choroti and Mataco with young boys at the attainment of puberty, nor do the present day Tobas in Bolivia practise any ceremonies of this kind. According to some ancient writers, the Tobas of the 18th century practised certain ceremonies with young boys, consisting of a peculiar arrangement of their hair and in pricking them on the body with sharp-pointed bones, but since the particular purpose of these ceremonies was to initiate them into the profession of a warrior, I shall reserve the details till later on, in treating of Indian warfare.

On the other hand, when a young girl has her first menstruation and becomes marriageable, the incident is celebrated among all Chaco tribes with certain feasts, dances, beer-drinking, and purely religious rites. In order fully to understand these ceremonies it is necessary to know the ideas which the Indians entertain about the mysterious phenomena of puberty. It is by no means sufficient to say that the puberty ceremonies simply serve to initiate the girl into her coming sexual life; their significance is much deeper.

881 The physiological process which causes the menstruation of the
941 women, incomprehensible as it seems to the Indian, strikes him as something extremely mysterious and must needs give rise to certain superstitious beliefs. Thus both the Tobas and the other Chaco tribes seem to have
[821] the idea that this strange phenomenon is caused, or at any rate influenced, by the new moon. Moreover, since the menstrual periods, and especially the first menses, are as a rule connected with certain nervous disorders and other alterations in the physical condition of the woman, it is naturally thought that during these critical days she is seriously exposed to the influence of evil spirits. At the same time, of course, owing to the awakening sexual desire, the relationship between this physiological

855 and carry on, his mother essayed to see whether dragging him off to some distance from the hut would help, but he struggled and rolled on the ground. Finally she controlled him and, without any short temperedness, and laughing all the time she set him down a few yards from the house where the child continued to cry but did not dare to return.

857 861 This same gentleness and absence of brutality can be observed among playing children. Thus, on numerous occasions I have been able to observe little children vying for possession of a small ball; they would push and charge into each other, but never maliciously or violently. Mataco education stresses sweetness and gentleness and a [157] violent man or one of evil character (witsax) [? Translator] inspires them with fear and disgust. From the tenderest age children learn to share their food. When I used to distribute candy the children would never fail to let the absent ones know so that they might have a part of what was being given.

Abortion and Infanticide

847 Abortion and infanticide used to be practiced by the Matacos on a large scale, as also among the other Chaco tribes. According to my informants, a woman has an abortion when she is pregnant and not married; when she has been abandoned by her husband or, after a quarrel with him, for vengeance. Many women undergo abortions when they are [12] pregnant for the first time, in the hope that such action will make future deliveries easier.

It is very generally held that the Chaco Indian women use powerful drugs to cause abortion, but this is doubtless merely legendary. The aids of which they make use are purely mechanical. During the fifth month after conception they get a friend to pound them on their abdomen until the blood begins to flow.

Marriage

832 In amorous relations the young girls appear to take more of the initiative than do the men. They easily become provocative and make

845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana. All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child. In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

853 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert. When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child. The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream

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583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter
[606] of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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861 of example and the natural desire to imitate has the most effect. It is interesting to note how the young boys constantly watch the occupations of the elder men and how easily in this way they acquire the necessary
868 skill in the same occupations, above all in fishing and hunting. When the Toba boy is about six or seven years old, his father makes him a small bow and arrows with which he frequently practises shooting, thus at an early age acquiring dexterity in managing the weapon. Similarly the girls follow their mothers everywhere, down to the river, to the fields, and the forest, keenly watching how she does her work and soon learning to do the same.

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3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

533 his waist from which hang a number of shells, claws, little horns,
222 teeth and similar trifles, beats on that rustic drum day and night without ceasing and, with the continous movement of his body, makes the trinkets about his waist rattle all this accompanied by a song or rather a lugubrious and high-pitched shouting which can be heard at a great distance. This ridiculous performance is not a simple demonstration of rejoining but rather, in their opinion, a rite necessary to hasten the ripening of the longed for and beneficent fruit."

"When a woman arrives from the forest laden with fruit, roots
222 262 or other eatables, all the other women of the village crowd to her hut and she, after having set aside enough for the sustenance of her family, distributes the rest, the other women not saying a word of
[626] showing any sign of appreciation. Were she to refrain from giving away her surplus, it would cause the greatest displeasure, and might even provoke some dangerous quarrel."

"The Mataguayos are timid and cowardly, but vengeful in
181 the extreme. They never forget an offense—sooner or later they will
[671] be avenged. The law of requital is unbreakable for them. They avoid making war when this is possible, but if they are attacked they
[411] defend themselves. Their most common weapon is the arrow."

"They recognize no authority and no law. The child obeys
593 its parents if it wishes to and the latter, though they may love their children, have no power at all over them. Nevertheless one does not generally encounter lack of respect toward the old or toward the unfortunate." [594]

"The men busy themselves with fishing and only very rarely
462 indulge in hunting. Their agricultural activities are limited to the
[241] sowing of a few clumps of pumpkins and watermelons. With the
[289] juice of the latter they make aloja. Some of them also devote their time to making thin ropes of agave fiber with which they construct their nets."

"All other work is done by the women. She must not only prepare the food but also fetch fruit and roots from the forest; not only bring water but also chop firewood; not only look after the cleanliness of the hut but also make it. In one word: she is a slave."

"When a girl reaches nubility she is hidden in a corner of the
●881 hut and covered with fronds and rags. It is illicit for her to speak to anybody or taste meat or fish for a determined length of time. Meanwhile a drummer goes through the same ceremony in front of her

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not
586 recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about. Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of
[684] the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new
791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance,
776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

●881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a
846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which
[753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

855 861 member of his own tribe. In the training of the Indian children the power of example and the natural desire to imitate has the most effect. It is interesting to note how the young boys constantly watch the occupations of the elder men and how easily in this way they acquire the necessary 868 skill in the same occupations, above all in fishing and hunting. When the Toba boy is about six or seven years old, his father makes him a small bow and arrows with which he frequently practises shooting, thus at an early age acquiring dexterity in managing the weapon. Similarly the girls follow their mothers everywhere, down to the river, to the fields, and the forest, keenly watching how she does her work and soon learning to do the same.

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Choroti SK6

process and the other procreative functions of the woman is realized. The attainment of puberty therefore for the Indian girl certainly means the beginning of her sexual life, but at the same time it means her entrance into a very critical epoch of development, during which she is often — especially at child-birth and during the following menses — exposed to supernatural dangers. Hence the initiation ceremonies at puberty have for their object partly her direct protection against these dangers for the time being, partly her purification once for all from the evils associated with her sexual functions during the years to come or — to express it more plainly — *to harden* her against evil spirits. From this point of view we have to regard all puberty ceremonies of the Indians, even such practices as painting, scarification, and tattooing of the body or face, often undertaken with girls on the attainment of puberty.

In the dances and conjurations performed in honour of girls at puberty it is the women who, contrary to what is generally the rule in religious ceremonies, play the most prominent part. Among the *Choroti* the puberty of girls is celebrated with a magical dance called *Káusima* after the instrument which the women use for it; the instrument is called *káhuis*. The *káhuis* is a dancing-staff, two or three meters in length, made of a light kind of wood or bamboo, which has a bunch of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These rattles produce a hollow sound when the staff is struck on the ground and are supposed to possess a mysterious power to influence the spirits. This power of course must be explained from the fact that to the Choroti the deer is a demoniacal animal. The *káhuis* staff is the only magical instrument used by the Choroti women and it is never handled by the men.

The dance begins at the first new moon after the appearance of the signs of puberty, because the moon is believed to cause and have great influence upon the menstruation of women. It is performed every day until the following new moon, sometimes even still longer. At a *Káusima* dance which I witnessed the arrangement was as follows. The mother of the girl and some other elderly women formed a circle, or rather an elliptic ring, outside the hut where the girl was, each holding her rattling dancing-staff. Close to the ring four medicine-men were sitting at equal distances from one another, holding their rattle gourds (*pelīte*). There were besides two more medicine-men standing up, each provided with a drum. During the dance the women moved round ceremoniously with slow, regular steps, chanting loudly and marking time with their rattle staffs which they struck on the ground. The men outside the ring also chanted, shaking

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Toba SI12

The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter.

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *Mataco* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aitláh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men.

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*.

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat.

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *Mataco* and the *Choroti* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends. 756 821

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river. 823

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry. 821 535 534

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die. 881 841

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox. 821 787

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aleja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *asutsha;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregrant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
[867] will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
[554] cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

naked on the plaza where the small children could throw stones at it and the hungry dogs could lick it. No one apparently wanted to touch the corpse and when the missionary ordered the Indians to bury it, they merely removed the remains to the bush but did not bother to dig a grave. The missionary attributed the people's indifference to the fact that the girl had no close relatives and that she was ill-tempered. According to the Indians, her bad disposition was also the cause of her unhappy love life.

Third case. A boy of 16 and his 14 year old wife often quarreled until, finally, the boy commited suicide. The girl at first appeared unconcerned but later joined in the death wailing. Soon afterwards she became depressed because some of the people held her responsible for her husband's death. Three days later she ate sachasandia fruit late in the afternoon expecting that the poison would take effect when she slept and when no one would detect her condition. She was discovered, however, and the missionary, who was called in great haste, was able to save her life. Although her parents reacted with concern, they seemed less disturbed than her parents in-law.

Fourth case. The cause for Teresa's attempted suicide was sexual frustration. This girl was about 13 years old and, since she had already menstruated, was considered to be an adult. She was extremely anxious to find a husband but all the young men were already married. Out of sheer desperation she set out for Espinillo, a village near her camp, hoping to attract the attention of the Argentine settlers there. Her relatives, however, prevented her from carrying out this project. As a result she became very despondent and finally ate sachasandia. When she felt the worst effects of the poison she became panic-stricken and went herself to the dispensary to get an emetic, which saved her life. Her widowed mother was deeply concerned and could not be persuaded that the girl would recover. During her daughter's illness, she often woke the girl from sleep, fearing that she might actually be dead.

Fifth case. Manuel, a boy of about 17, was married to an illtempered girl who at that time was pregnant by him. Tiring of her sharp tongue, he abandoned her and married another girl, Manuela. His first wife refused to resign herself to the new situation and continually quarreled with her former husband and his new wife. Her aggressiveness so depressed the couple that both decided to take poison to escape the vituperations of the incensed woman. In this case no one seemed particularly affected by the attempted suicide, perhaps because neither of the victims had living parents. It was a small child who warned the missionary in the middle of the night. The missionary

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

The custom of tattooing, as it was practised by the ancient Guaycurú is described by Father Dobrizhoffer in much the following way. The Abiponian women, says the Father, [1]) not content with the marks common to both sexes, have their face, breast, and arms covered with black figures of various shapes, so that they present the appearance of a Turkish carpet. As soon as a young woman is of age to be married, she is ordered to be marked according to custom. She reclines her head upon the lap of an old woman and is pricked. Thorns are used for a pencil, and ashes mixed with blood for paint. The old woman, sticking the points of the thorns deep into the flesh, describes various figures till the whole face streams with blood. The first day she is sent home with her face half pricked with the thorns, and is recalled the next and the next after that, to have the rest of her face, the breast, and the arms pricked in like manner. Meantime she is shut up for several days in her father's tent and wrapped in a hide that she may receive no injury from the cold air. Carefully abstaining from meat, fish, and some other sorts of food, she feeds upon nothing but a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood. [2])

From Dobrizhoffer's account it appears that tattooing was practised by the ancient Guaycurú in the same way as by the present-day Chaco tribes.

Among the puberty customs we may also, in a certain sense, reckon the perforation of the ear-lobes for the insertion of wooden plugs or tubes. The perforation takes place even before the age of puberty, when the boy or girl is five or six years old, but the wooden ornaments are inserted later and are a sign that the boy or girl in question is regarded as a man or woman. The ear-lobe is pierced with a cactus thorn by an old woman, a grass or small wooden pin being inserted so as to prevent the wound from closing. Later on bigger and bigger pins are inserted, by which the holes are more and more extended, and lastly the plug or tube, which forms one of the most prominent ornaments of the Indians. The wooden plugs which the Tobas formerly wore in their ear-lobes, were so thick and heavy that they hung nearly down to the shoulders. In our own days they are only used by the Argentine Pilága, not by the Bolivian Tobas. It is to be observed that although the ear-lobes of both sexes are perforated, the ear-plugs or tubes are among the Choroti, Mataco, and Ashluslay worn chiefly by men, seldom by women, whereas among the Tobas *only* men wear them. These ornaments seem to have chiefly a magical significance.

[1]) Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, II. 20 sq.

[2]) This fruit is evidently the tasi fruit mentioned above, which thus is still eaten by the Toba women when they have to observe ceremonial fasting.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

tion to the men shaking rattles, one or more Indians are beating drums and chanting. These noisy ceremonies are continued with short intervals during the whole night. When one party of Indians are tired and stop to rest for a moment, they are relieved by another party, since it is considered very important that there should be no interruption in the ceremonies; otherwise they would lose something of their effect. In the early morning the danger is believed to have passed; the fermentation has taken place, and the evil spirits have not been able to approach the drink and spoil it.

Although this negative object of the rites is particularly emphasized by the Indians, they also have a positive object which is indicated by the very expression »hurry on the fermentation». As we have already seen, the fruit of which the drink is made is believed to be animated by a spirit, and it is the same spirit that is active in the fermented, intoxicating beer. The rites described, while they are supposed to keep off evil spirits, are also intended to influence magically the plant-spirit itself and to bring it to its highest point of development, which is marked by the fermentation. This is partly effected through the chanting, the shaking of rattles, and the drumming, partly through the procedure of mixing the mashed fruit with saliva. The saliva really has the property of bringing about fermentation, and this phenomenon is explained by the superstitious Indian as due to the supernatural virtues which this secretion is believed to possess. Even the fact that only *old* women chew the fruit is probably not accidental. Old people have by nature a stronger magical power than the young and their saliva has therefore greater efficacy.

The Chaco Indians not only try to promote the growth of the fruits by shaking rattles and drumming, but also by *dancing*. Thus the Toba dance *Nahót dónnaran* is not only performed in cases of sickness, but also with a view to »hurrying on» the chanar fruit (*niapilák tákkai*). Once I witnessed such a ceremony. The chañar fruit — next to the algaroba the most important of the fruits growing in the Chaco forests — reaches maturity in the month of October and forms the staple food of the Indians during that month. The dance was performed in the following way. The fruit gathered in during the day was spread out on cloths or big hides on the ground outside the houses, where they are generally laid to dry. The dance took place at night. A young man began to dance alone, stamping alternately with his feet on the ground, without using any rattle, and chanting at first in a low voice. Gradually his movements